DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 322 RC 013 594

AUTHOR Miller, Hubert J.
TITLE Jose Vasconcelos--A Man for All the Americas. The Tinker Pamphlet Series for the Teaching of Mexican American Heritage.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 93p.; For related documents, see ED 114 227-230.
AVAILABLE FROM The New Santander Press, P.O. Box 471, Edinburg, Texas 78539 ($3.00).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Biographies; *Community Leaders; Cultural Interrelationships; *Culture Conflict; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; *Mexican American History; *Mexicans; *Political Attitudes; Political Influences; Revolution; Social History; Western Civilization
IDENTIFIERS Mexico; *Vasconcelos (Jose)

ABSTRACT

Due to his dissatisfaction with the Diaz government, Jose Vasconcelos joined the revolutionary leader Francisco Madero, who along with other rebel leaders, brought an end to the Diaz regime in 1911. Vasconcelos shared the successes and misfortunes that followed Diaz's overthrow. When the Madero government came to an abrupt end in 1913, Vasconcelos went into exile which, with one brief interruption, continued until 1920. In the early 1920's, Vasconcelos was rector of the national university, and then under President Alvaro Obregon was minister of education. With the ascendancy of Plutarco Elias Calles to the presidency, Vasconcelos went into exile until 1929, when he became a candidate for the presidency. His subsequent defeat left him with a bitter memory and to his dying day he claimed he was unjustly deprived of the presidency. Again Vasconcelos went into exile until 1940 when he returned and lived in Mexico City until his death in 1959. Vasconcelo's most significant writings were done during his exile years. Intended as a teaching tool for teachers, this booklet aims to set forth the most salient features of Jose Vasconcelos' life. A 35-item bibliography provides additional sources of information and some films and filmstrips. (Author/NQA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

JOSE VASCONCELOS

A MAN FOR ALL THE AMERICAS

HUBERT J. MILLER

ED221322

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Hubert J. Miller

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RC013534

The Tinker Pamphlet Series
for
The Teaching of Mexican American Heritage

© Hubert J. Miller 1977

To The Mexican People
who have given the Americas
José Vasconcelos

EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

Martha T. Muse, Chairman and President of the Tinker Foundation

Marietta Daniels Shepherd, Chief, Library Development Program Organization of American States

Curtis Wilgus, President of Inter-American Bibliographical and Library Association

Nettie Lee Benson, Former Head of Latin American Collection, The University of Texas at Austin

José Cárdenas, Executive Director of Intercultural Development Research Association, San Antonio, Texas

Antonio E. García, Superintendent of the Rio Grande City Consolidated Independent School District, Rio Grande City, Texas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

To the Teacher i

Introduction 1

Early Years 3

The Revolution of 1910 10

Vasconcelos Opposes Carranza 14

Educational Reforms 17

Exile under Calles 34

Vasconcelos Runs for the Presidency 39

Exile and the Cardenas Era 51

Final Years 66

Conclusion 70

Footnotes 75

Bibliography 78

Audio-Visual Aids 81

TO THE TEACHER

The revolutionary upheavals in twentieth century Mexico produced varied and colorful figures, some of which attracted international attention. Among these illustrious figures appeared the name of José Vasconcelos.

In the Latin American mold he was both a *pensador* (thinker) and a man of action. In his writings and activities the reader can glean many of the revolutionary aspirations that caused the Mexican people to overthrow the Porfirio Díaz government and develop a new destiny for the Mexican people. Among these varied aspirations were the search for democracy, socioeconomic justice, abolition of illiteracy, and the development of a sense of national destiny. To all of these Vasconcelos contributed both by his writings and activities.

Present-day scholars still debate the degree of fulfillment of these revolutionary goals. The controversy ranges all the way from those who have pronounced the revolution dead to others who consider the fulfillment of the goals an evolutionary process still going on. The work of Vasconcelos makes it clear that much remains to be done if Mexico seeks to redeem its commitment to the revolutionary aspirations that started the events of 1910 and after.

Commitment to old revolutionary goals does not mean that twentieth century Mexico has not changed since 1910. Industrialization and demographic expansion alone have altered the face of Mexico and have presented a new set of problems that are beyond the wildest dreams of the old revolutionary leaders. For instance, today the unemployment problem in the urban centers overshadows the land problem, which was the top priority for Zapatistas in the early 1900's.

Yet the basic aspirations of many revolutionists who wanted social justice, economic independence for their country, schools to meet the people's needs, a sense of pride in their nation, and a better way of life are desired that are not foreign to present-day Mexicans. Vasconcelos addressed all of these problems and therefore his message still remains relevant today--not only for Mexico but for all the Americas.

The study of the life of Vasconcelos is in a sense a study of the Mexican revolution as it passed through its various phases. In fact, to divorce the man from revolutionary Mexico would result in an incomplete picture. The story begins with Vasconcelos's life during the closing years of the Porfiriato and his dissatisfaction with the Díaz government. He joined the revolutionary leader Francisco Madero, who along with other rebel leaders, brought an end to the Díaz regime in 1911. From hereon Vasconcelos shared the successes and misfortunes that followed the overthrow of Díaz.

The Madero government came to an abrupt end in 1913 when President Victoriano Huerta took over. For Vasconcelos it meant exile which, with one brief interruption, continued until 1920.

The beginning of the 1920's found the Mexican *pensador* first in the position of rector of the national university and then under President Alvaro Obregón as minister of education. It was in the latter capacity that he achieved some of his most significant success. Again his stay in his native land was brief since with the ascendancy of Plutarco Elías Calles to the presidency, the minister of education went into exile until 1929.

On his return in 1929 he became a candidate for the presidency. The subsequent defeat left him with a bitter memory and to his dying day he claimed he was unjustly deprived of the presidency. Again it was a life of exile until 1940 when he returned and lived in Mexico City until his death in 1959.

The many years of exile proved most fruitful since it gave him ample opportunities to travel, think and write. In fact, his most significant writings were done during the exile years.

The booklet attempts to set forth the most salient features of the man's life but in no way does the writer claim to have

exhausted the colorful and varied life of this Mexican figure. To achieve such a goal will obviously require more pages than found in this publication. Neither is the intention to provide the reader with a complete analysis of the man's thinking. Here one may expect to find only a broad outline of Vasconcelos's major ideas. For instance, a study of his thought is bound to reveal contradictions in his thinking which has become a popular subject among Vasconcelos scholars. Should the reader desire further enlightenment on this subject he can consult works in the bibliography treating the philosophy of the man. Rather it is the intent of the author to provide the teacher with a timesaving device wherein can quickly be found the essentials of this all-important figure in the western hemisphere. In short, the booklet is a teaching tool and its effectiveness depends a great deal on the teacher's creative use of the resource in classroom instruction. For instance, it can serve a teacher well in treating questions involving United States relationships with Mexico and Latin America in general. Furthermore it can provide the historical backdrop to Mexican migrations to the United States during the current century and therefore a resource for Mexican American history.

Besides biographical data, the reader will find the ideas of Vasconcelos valuable in developing multicultural attitudes. These are especially relevant in the borderlands area where for centuries various cultures and ethnic groups have met and continue to meet. Vasconcelos in expounding his "la raza cósmica" has a meaningful message for all of us. For him the western hemisphere has served as the meeting grounds for different races and civilizations. His prophetic vision sees a new race and civilization developing, which he designated the "fifth race" or "the cosmic race". Each race and civilization has made and continues to make its contribution. In this sense it is not a melting pot which sought to shed cultural and racial diversities in order to achieve uniformity. Vasconcelos saw his "fifth race" as a search for unity in the Americas but a unity based on the harmony of the rich cultural diversities that have contributed to the formation of a mestizo civilization. Such an aspiration is long overdue in our instructional

program on all levels.

The bibliography at the end of the booklet can provide the teacher with further reading on the life and thinking of the man. Available in English are Gabriella de Beer's *José Vasconcelos and His World*, John H. Haddox's *Vasconcelos of Mexico* and the autobiographical account, *A Mexican Ulysses*. Bilingual teachers can find additional resource material in Agustín Basave's *La filosofía de José Vasconcelos*, Itzhak Bar-Lewaw's *Introducción crítico-biográfica a José Vasconcelos* and in the four volumes of Vasconcelos's writings entitled *Obras completas*. Most writers tend to concentrate on various aspects of the man's thinking. The aforementioned works provide insights into his thinking but with the exception of the Haddox work also provide biographical details that make it easier to understand this complex Mexican figure.

The audio-visual aids are of a more general nature in covering the revolutionary era and contemporary Mexico rather than focusing on the life of Vasconcelos. The study of the Mexican thinker can provide both teacher and student more meaningful insights when viewing these materials. Therefore, a more graphic image of the Mexican revolution should result as well as a better understanding of the historic conditions in twentieth century Mexico that prompted a mass exodus to the United States.

The author is greatly indebted to the Tinker Foundation in New York for making this teaching tool possible. Not only did the Foundation provide the time to do the booklet but it also underwrote the cost of publication. The project hopefully in some small measure fulfills the aspirations of Dr. Edward Larocque Tinker, who was ever conscious of the need for building bridges between the people of Latin America and the United States.

Acknowledgments are in order for my colleague, Manuel López, whose proofreading and helpful suggestions are greatly appreciated. Al Ramírez, proprietor of the New Santander Press, merits recognition for his work in preparing the booklet for publication. Credits for proofreading, editing and typing of the original manuscript go to Doris Miller, as well as the overseeing of many details associated with the preparation of

the manuscript for publication. Acknowledgments do not hold the recognized parties responsible for errors or ideas expressed in the work. Such responsibility rests solely with the author.

Pan American University Hubert J. Miller

June 1977

INTRODUCTION

Mexico in 1910 approached its independence centennial. It also marked the beginning of a new era in the nation's history, namely the Revolution of 1910, which Mexicans proudly call their second revolution. The first revolution started in 1810 and culminated with the country's political independence from Spain in 1821. Political autonomy did not guarantee the resolution of many other problems that faced the republic during the first one hundred years. Serious social, economic and cultural problems continued to plague the Mexican people. At no point in Mexican history was the failure to resolve these problems more evident than during the presidency of Porfirio Díaz.

The period from 1877 to 1911 is called the *porfiriato* since it was dominated by President Porfirio Díaz. The *porfiriato* rule of "little politics, much administration" brought order and progress--something that the republic had hardly ever experienced since its independence in 1821. But the people paid a dear price for developing the country into a modern state. Díaz and his friends inaugurated much prosperity but it never trickled down to the vast majority of the people. The daily wage scale had hardly improved over that of the colonial era despite the rising cost of living. Should labor demand a rightful share of the prosperity, the army was a convenient tool to suppress labor unrest.

Neither did the Díaz government hear the cry of the landless tenant. With the abolition of the common lands, the Mexican peasant during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was worse off than ever. The cry for "land and liberty" was the inevitable result.

The rewards of modernization benefited Díaz and his friends, which included a small select group known as the *científicos*. These worshiped science and material progress but saw little hope for the rank and file other than as a laboring force to be exploited in making Mexico a modern state. Their philosophy stressed pragmatic results such as favorable balance of trade, balanced budgets, increased investments, exploitation of natural resources, and construction of transportation and communication systems. The country was in need of these improvements but they proved beneficial only to the few that enjoyed the

Porfiriato prosperity.

Among the few that enjoyed the new founded riches were the foreign investors to whom the Díaz men gave liberal concessions for railroad construction and land grants for farming, ranching and mineral exploitation. To secure the property rights of the foreigners, President Díaz could always call on his rural police force, called *rurales*. The domination of Mexican wealth by foreigners gave rise to the cry that the Mexicans were stepchildren in their own land.

If the rank and file Mexican did not share in the economic pie, neither did he enjoy the cultural or social benefits. It was a Díaz dream to make Mexico City a Paris in the western hemisphere, which was beneficial to the few who saw it as a means for greater foreign investments. Although the *científicos* talked in glowing terms of modernizing education, again it was a system that proved beneficial to the few who could afford it as at the same time the illiteracy rate reached an unprecedented peak. Even the president's last minute efforts to do something about the dismal picture was a case of too late and too little. The *científicos* failed to realize that with modernization an illiterate public is an anathema.

The Díaz government deserves to be remembered for taking the first steps in modernizing Mexico. Subsequent administrations benefited from the program even though they were reluctant to give due credit to Don Porfirio. Yet the price that was paid for modernization left a legacy of a socially, economically and culturally impoverished nation. Herein lie causes for a revolution and Mexico was ripe for one in 1910. All that Mexico needed were leaders to carry it out.

The precursors and the leaders were many. Among the precursors was Ricardo Flores Magón. Forced to flee Mexico because of his anti-Díaz activities during the early years of the 1900's he continued his revolutionary activities in the United States where he also became concerned about the plight of the Mexican American people.[1] By 1910 new leaders against the Díaz regime had appeared on the scene. Such well-known revolutionary figures as Francisco Madero, Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa need no introduction. It was during this period that a Mexican intellectual figure made his appearance, namely, José Vasconcelos.

EARLY YEARS

Oaxaca in southern Mexico has been the birthplace of a number of celebrated men in Mexican history, such as Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz. On February 27, 1882,[2] it added another illustrious Mexican to its ranks in the person of José Vasconcelos. His parents were Ignacio and Carmen Calderón Conde. José was the second of nine children. His oldest brother, Luis, died at a very young age. There were four girls in the family named Concha, Dolores, Carmen and Soledad and three brothers, Carlos, Ignacio and Samuel.

The Vasconcelos family enjoyed a middle class income which was helped by ties to the Díaz administration. The paternal grandfather of José, Joaquín Vanconcelos, was a clothing merchant who had supported Díaz in his childhood days. José's father worked in the Mexican customs office and this cause the family to travel frequently.

The mother was the daughter of Doctor Esteban Calderón Condiani, who was the personal physician of the president and served as the senator from the state of Oaxaca. Biographers as well as Vasconcelos stress the influence of the mother on her son. For instance, her deep Catholic convictions appear to have left a lasting imprint on the thinking of her son despite his flirtations with Positivism and Communism during his youthful years. According to Agustín Basave, a biographer of Vasconcelos, the young man inherited his strong sense of romanticism, which stressed emotionalism, from his mother. This, he claimed, had both good and bad results. On the one hand it gave him an esthetic view of heaven but on the other hand it could lead to pride and capricious behavior. The death of his mother was a most difficult period in his life, to the point that it almost caused him to lose his faith. He had hoped that God would work a miracle to save her. Vasconcelos summed up well the lasting maternal influence in his life when he wrote:

> My mother's deep voice gave direction to my thoughts, determined my impulses. One might say that I was bound to her by an invisible, psychological umbilical cord which endured for many years after the breaking of the physical bond.3

Apparently the strong religious convictions of the mother must have influenced the lives of the other children. Two of her daughters, Concha and Carmen, became nuns. The influence was undoubtedly less so on her youngest son, Samuel, who became a militant communist.

Ignacio Vasconcelos's duties of custom inspector necessitated frequent changes of residence for the family. When José was only two years old the family moved to the state of Chiapas, which borders Guatemala. Next the family took up residence in Ciudad Juárez, where they stayed until 1886. After this it was on to Piedras Negras. It was here that José at the age of six entered school. Since Piedras Negras had little to offer in the area of education, the family decided to send their son to the elementary school in Eagle Pass. His experiences in the Anglo American school were not forgotten. He was well pleased with his teachers and the democratic manner in which the school was conducted. He regretted that these qualities were not part of the Mexican school system. It also proved to be his first encounter with discrimination, which he related in his *A Mexican Ulysses*:

> My first experience in the school there was a bitter one. There I saw North American and Mexican children sitting in front of a teacher whose language I did not understand. Suddenly my nearest neighbor, a bilingual Texan, stuck his elbow into my side and said, "Hey you! How many of them can you lick?" I didn't understand, and he went on, "Can you take on Jack?" and he pointed to a red-haired boy. After looking him over, I replied modestly that I couldn't. "And Johnny and Bill?" Finally, worn out by his insistence, I answered at random, "Yes." The boy in question was more or less my size.
>
> As soon as we went out for recess, they formed a circle. Some boys came over to take a close look at me; others grabbed my books; one shook hands, and several gave me a push. Then my benchmate shouted, "This guy says he can lick Tom!" They put us face to face; they drew a line on the ground between us; the first to step over it was the braver. We rushed at each other, not at the line, and we fought. We stepped back and looked each other over; we fought again; after a while they pulled us apart. "O.K.," said my neighbor, "you come after him," and to me, "You're number seven." Puzzled and offended, I couldn't do anything but submit. The whole episode made me angry and I withdrew further into myself. I was a timid, sad child, subject to sudden fits of rage.
>
> • • •

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

School had been winning me over gradually. Now I would not have exchanged it for any pastime. I never missed a class. All things considered, the school was very permissive and the teachers fair. The year we had a woman teacher I got my first punishment. I don't remember what I had done, but I was forced to hold out my hand. The blow I received was given with a will, but still without anger.

The fair-mindedness of the teachers stood out in connection with the arguments arising from Texas history. The independence of Texas and the war of 1847 divided the class into rival camps. We Mexicans in the class were not numerous, but we stood our ground. When I say Mexicans, I include the many who lived in Texas, and whose fathers had become naturalized, but who made common cause with us because of their descent. And if they had not, it would have turned out just the same, since the Yankees put us all in the same category. When it was said in class that a hundred Yankees could put to flight a thousand Mexicans, I got up and said, "That isn't so!" And it made me still more angry if some pupil compared the customs of the Mexicans to those of the Eskimos, and said, "Mexicans are a semi-civilized people." At our house, on the other hand, we believed that Yankees had just recently acquired culture. I would get up in class to argue, "We had printing before you did." And the teacher would chime in, "Yes, look at Joe: he's a Mexican. Isn't he civilized? Isn't he a gentleman?"

For the moment, this fair observation established a cordial relationship, but soon our passions were aroused again. We made a date for recess; blows were exchanged. The fight became a personal one. We went to the neighboring field. A large group followed us. We began to fight in earnest. From the beginning, I got the worst of it. My opponent beat me up methodically. Next day, at lunch time, while I was brooding over my defeat of the previous day, a Mexican fellow-student, one of those born and brought up beside the river, came up. "Here, take this," he said, handing me a sharp razor. "I'm lending it to you. These gringos are afraid of the blade. Keep it for this afternoon."

When we came out of school, my foe took up a position in front of his gang. I came closer, with my friends. I made him a sign, inviting him to fight, and at the same time showed the open blade in my right hand. "Not that way," said Jim, "the way we did yesterday." "No, not like yesterday," I said, "like this." My Mexican friend told me, "Now these gringos won't bother you." It was lucky that I managed to make myself respected in this way, for I loved the classes.4

5

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

These bitter memories left a lasting mark on his character as his later writings and activities showed. The Eagle Pass experience served as a constant reminder of a weak Mexico facing a powerful norther neighbor. One of his later aspirations was the building up of a strong Mexico to face its powerful neighbor. In his memoirs he stated that he studied maps to determine the best routes to be used by the Mexican army to reconquer the lost territory from the United States.

Yet the bitter memories did not erase his fond recollection of teachers at the Eagle Pass elementary school. Later when he was in Mexico City he observed that this elementary school surpassed what the cultural center of Mexico had to offer. He also remembered one of his elementary teachers who recognized his great talent and encouraged him to seek a scholarship at the University of Texas in Austin. He jokingly reacted that this might have led to his becoming a Yankee philosopher instead of a Mexican one.

The years in Piedras Negras were financially rewarding for the family but unfortunately the father was not a thrifty provider. José complained that in times of need the family was short on funds. The Piedras Negras residence terminated in 1895 when the father was given a customs post in Campeche. For the son it meant a brief stay in Toluca, where he studied in the Instituto de Toluca. The institution, he claimed, was inferior to the school in Eagle Pass. He observed that the institute had the honor of graduating illustrious Mexicans but yet could not match the academic quality of a frontier school in the United States. However he found relief in Toluca since no longer was he confronted with the dominating Anglo influence.

By 1896 the family had completed the move to Campeche and the young man rejoined the family to continue his education. The stay at the Campeche institute hardly lasted beyond a year. Again he found the institute inferior to the Eagle Pass school. The dissatisfaction must have prompted him to seek admission into the National Preparatory School in Mexico City, which prepared him for entry into law school in 1905.

His youthful years in the capital are graphically portrayed in his autobiography. It was a bohemian life style of wine, women and song. In reading these pages one is reminded of the

confessions of St. Augustine. However all was not pleasure. His autobiographical account makes it clear that he had serious misgivings about the Porfirian group that governed Mexico. He remarked that,

> In those days I felt as a revolutionary: I believed that social reforms in the twentieth century could be brought about with aid of the Girondists and even of Robespierre's. I waxed indignant over the miseries of our public life. I wrote against our wealthy landowners who bought palaces in Paris and left their workers destitute . . . The governmental tyranny made itself the accomplice of every abuse and opposed any reform. It thus became necessary to overthrow it. The future could not be planned until that job was done; for the first task to be accomplished was the conquest of liberty.5

Although he had a law degree, he was quick to admit that it was not his first love. It was purely a means to earn a living. His first love was to be a philosopher but such a profession was not in keeping with the materialistic values of the Positivist system that reigned supreme in the country's educational circles. His immediate need was to earn a living and in the meantime his philosophical aspirations had to wait.

Armed with a law degree Vasconcelos briefly served as a public notary, which he considered better than no job. Later, with better pay, he took up a position in a civil court. When the judge of the court became a senator, he set up a law office and employed the young law graduate. In 1906 Vasconcelos accepted the position as district attorney in Durango. Brighter prospects appeared in 1907 when he became a junior partner with the United States law firm of Warner, Johnson and Wilson in Mexico City. Although these positions provided him with the needed income, his true interests were elsewhere. It was during this period that he and a group of men started the Ateneo de la Juventud (Atheneum of Youth).

The opening of the twentieth century witnessed growing opposition to the aging Porfirian regime. The Manifest of 1906 issued by Ricardo Flores Magón and his Mexican Liberal Party called for an end to the dictatorship. At the same time a group of young intellectuals led by Antonio Caso questioned the rule of President Díaz and his *científicos*. Caso, with the help of Pedro

7 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Henríquez Ureña, Alfonso Reyes, and Vasconcelos, formed on October 28, 1909, the Ateneo de la Juventud and served as its first president. Vasconcelos held the post from 1910 to 1911. Its membership quickly increased to fifty and included some of the most promising intellectuals of the period, including the famed Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera. In meetings which included presentation of papers, debates and publications, the group questioned all phases of the Porfirian rule. Their criticism focused on the growing domination of the nation's economic life by foreigners, Positivism and its stress on materialism, social and economic injustices that were the lost of the vast majority of the Mexican people, and the lack of freedom under the Díaz regime. In a lecture sponsored by the atheneum, Vasconcelos attacked Gabino Barreda, the father of Mexican Positivism, and his educational reforms of 1867. He condemned Positivism because of its adherence to the tenet that the only valid knowledge was scientific. This materialism, the young intellectual claimed, denied artistic, metaphysical and theological values. Vasconcelos was not blind to the fact that Barreda's stress on scientific knowledge had beneficial results for the Mexican educational system. He admitted that scientific fanaticism was better than religious fanaticism, but too much concern with the former can and did lead to the neglect of the spiritual aspirations of man. He had no sympathy for the Positivist unquestioning faith in scientific principles, many of which he argued were mere hypotheses. His conclusion was that the Positivism of the Frenchman August Comte and the Englishman Herbert Spencer never could satisfy the aspirations of the Mexican people.

While the majority of the members in the atheneum were lawyers, the group included other members from all walks of life, such as medical doctors, educators, architects, engineers and historians. They were of middle class origin and did not fit the revolutionary mold of a Ricardo Flores Magón or Emiliano Zapata but rather that of a Francisco Madero. Their periodic discussion format makes it clear that their common goal was to contribute to the spiritualization of a nation that they found demoralized. In carrying out this mission, the young intellectuals studied both ancient and modern philosophers.

The young intellectuals found Emanuel Kant's *Critique of*

Pure Reason and Henri Bergson's thinking especially helpful in attacking what the group considered serious epistemological erors underlying all empiricism. Not only could they call on these philosophers to achieve their mission against Positivism but they also welcomed the pronouncements of Justo Sierra, a man who had served Díaz in cabinet posts, including the ministry of education. Previous to the formal organization of the atheneum, Sierra gave a speech on March 22, 1908, in which he raised serious doubts about the validity of the Positivist system. For the young men in the atheneum it was the case of a Positivist seeing the errors of his way.

The members of the Ateneo de la Juventud spread their message through the founding in 1912 of a People's University, which lasted ten years. The lesson carried to the people was the power of sentiment of human responsibility, which must control individual and social conduct. It was an attack on the fetishism of science, bourgeois conformity and social Darwinism. According to Vicente Lombardo Toledano, a later Mexican intellectual and labor leader, it was the tidings of a

> joyous Christian nonconformity of a full life, shared by rich and poor alike, by the learned and the unlearned, by the proud and the rebellious. It was rightly thought that it was necessary once more to draw the spirit close to the pure sources of philosophy and the humanities and that it was necessary to spread these ideas, not only among the enlightened classes but among the people as well.6

The young intellectuals were doing their job well in weakening the grip of Positivism on Mexican life. This first step was necessary in order to develop a new philosophical system that could guide Mexico in the future.

The hectic years as a young intellectual revolutionary also witnessed Vasconcelos's marriage to Serafina Miranda of Oaxaca in 1909. From this union came José Ygnacio in 1910 and Carmen in 1911. The marriage was a sad experience for him since he considered it an affair of passion rather than true love. The feelings towards his wife must have carried over to the pages of his autobiography where she remained an anonymous figure. Even the birth of Carmen was a disappointment to him but later on she became his beloved child who stayed with him in many of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

his later tribulations. Despite the misgivings about the marriage he remained married to Serafina until her death. In 1942 he married Esperanza Cruz, a pianist from Orizaba. From this second marriage a son, Hector, was born in 1944.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1910

Vasconcelos did not limit his activities to the *ateneo*. He wrote anti-Díaz articles for the *Monitor republicano*. The opposition to Don Porfirio was not personal but came from a strong sense of liberty and human dignity, all of which he felt the Díaz regime violated. He was not a revolutionist in the sense of supporting a violent overthrow of the government but he hoped to see changes effected through the exercise of the vote. In fact, it was Vasconcelos who formulated the slogan "effective suffrage and no reelection", which later became the popular cry of the Francisco Madero revolution in 1910.

These ideas caught the attention of Madero, who in 1909 sought the help of the young intellectual in organizing the Anti-Reelectionist Center of Mexico in which he became secretary. At the same time Vasconcelos edited the anti-Díaz periodical, *The Anti-Reelectionist*. President Díaz tolerated opposition as long as he felt it was no threat to his government. In the past, elections were viewed as mere formalities by the ruling group, but formalities could be threatened by the rising voices of opposition. The result was the dissolution of the Anti-Reelectionist Center but opposition continued to mount. A new organization called the Constitutional Progressive Party was formed and Vasconcelos became a member of its governing committee. The party organized meetings and clubs throughout the country which brought the group in contact with the people and gave Vasconcelos the opportunity to try his hand at political oratory. His frequent attacks against Díaz and the *científicos* made him realize that exile could very well be his fate. His fears were confirmed and he left for New York, where he took on the occupation of translator and typist of commercial letters. The exile was only of three months duration and after receiving a general amnesty from the Mexican government, he was back in the Mexican capital by the summer of 1910.

Again he worked for the law firm of Warner, Johnson and Wilson. The legal profession was a means for survival. The true commitment was to Madero's cause. When Madero left Mexico after the 1910 election to take up his residence in San Antonio, Vasconcelos joined him. The revolutionary leader appointed him press secretary to Francisco Vásquez who functioned as the revolutionist's confidential agent in Washington, D.C. When Vásquez resigned his post, Vasconcelos took over the duties of the office. He did not return to Mexico until Madero's triumphant entry into the Mexican capital in the summer of 1911. For his faithful services the new president desired to reward him with a government post, but Vasconcelos made it clear that he did not join the movement to seek rewards. Again it was back to private law practice.

Madero, Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata and other Mexican revolutionary leaders had succeeded in overthrowing the hated Porfirian rule. Vasconcelos claimed the public opinion in the United States supported the change because the people believed that the Mexican nation was entitled to freedom and progress just like any other nation. Although there was much consensus regarding dissatisfaction with the Díaz government, such harmonious thinking did not extend to working out a program for the nation's centuries old problems. For instance, Zapata's cry for "land and liberty" did not fit into Madero's plans of working for political reforms, which failed to make socioeconomic reforms top priority.

On the other hand, there were foreign investors who felt that the Madero government did not promise adequate security for their holdings. This group also feared that their privileged position and concessions received from President Díaz might be terminated. Henry Lane Wilson, the United States ambassador to Mexico, was one of the most active leaders in defending foreign interests. Madero was well aware of these interests and worked for the removal of the ambassador. There was a bright spot on the horizon. President Woodrow Wilson had been elected in November of 1912 and would take office the following March. Since the ambassador was an appointee of President Taft, it was a foregone conclusion his removal could be effected, especially since the new United States president supported Madero. Unfortunately for the government of Mexico, the

"Tragic Ten Days" intervened in February of 1913, which resulted in the overthrow of Madero, his imprisonment and finally the execution of the president and his Vice-President Pino Suárez. The man who headed the bloody coup d'etat was General Victoriano Huerta. Involved in the conspiracy was Henry Lane Wilson.

Vasconcelos was a witness to these sad events. During the imprisonment of Madero and Suárez he interceded with the United States ambassador but like so many other pleas, including those of Madero's wife, these fell on deaf ears. The fate that awaited Vasconcelos and other supporters of the dead president was imprisonment. Shortly thereafter he was freed on condition that he remain in Mexico. He did not honor the condition but immediately fled to Cuba and from there to Europe. During the Huerta presidency from 1913 to 1914 he visited France, Spain, Italy and England. The travels offered him time to study the history of western civilization.

Vasconcelos was a man fond of travel. Apparently his nomadic childhood years created a wanderlust in his soul. To him travel meant the broadening of one's intellectual and cultural horizons and ought to be a right inscribed in the fundamental charter of every nation. He contended that to deprive an individual of the right to travel is the same as imprisonment. Man needs to see and study new religions, new cultures and different ways of life. The many and varied experiences he gained through his travels greatly influenced his thinking and writings.

Visiting foreign lands did not mean that Vasconcelos forgot his beloved Mexico ruled by Huerta. When he fled Mexico in 1913 he had thrown his support to Venustiano Carranza, the governor of Coahuila and former federal senator from that state during the Díaz years. Carranza was gathering support in northern Mexico to work for the overthrow of Huerta. The group called themselves Constitutionalists, because they claimed they were upholding the Constitution of 1857. Huerta's usurpation in 1914 was seen as a violation of that document. Vasconcelos offered his help by serving as Carranza's confidential agent in England. His main mission was to prevent the Huerta government from obtaining bonds in Europe. This he did

successfully by distributing a publication entitled *The Revolution in Mexico*.

After the brief sojourn in Europe, he returned to the United States in the early part of 1914. He took up residences in Washington and New York and served as Carranza's representative to the ABC international conference at Niagara Falls, which was occasioned by the U.S. occupation of Vera Cruz.7 President Woodrow Wilson had ordered the occupation to address the wrongs that Mexican government officials had committed against United States naval personnel earlier at the port of Tampico. More significant that the alleged insult to United States military personnel was Wilson's policy of seeking the overthrow of the Huerta regime. By occupying Vera Cruz, Wilson could effectively cut off aid from Europe, especially Germany, that might save Huerta against the growing opposition of Carranza and other revolutionary movements, such as the perennial one led by Zapata in southern Mexico. Despite the fact that the occupation hurt the Huerta government, Vasconcelos refused to support Wilson in the action. For him this was intervention in the internal affairs of Mexico and his country had a long and sad history of outside intervention. In fact, he warned that it could prove beneficial to Huerta since it gave him the opportunity to play the role of the savior of his people against United States aggression. At the same time, he refused to attend the ABC conferences if Mexican internal affairs were discussed. His major concern was for the conferences to treat the problem of getting the United States out of Mexico. The Huerta delegation, which was also present at the meetings, desired to gain support for defeating the revolutionary groups in Mexico.

Despite Huerta's efforts to seek support in defeating his enemies, his days were numbered. The revolutionists had gained control of northern Mexico and this meant no aid was forthcoming from that sector while Carranza enjoyed the tacit support of President Wilson and could obtain needed supplies. Neither was help available throught the port of Vera Cruz as long as it was occupied by United States military forces. With the bright prospects of a successful overthrow of Huerta, Vasconcelos decided to go to Piedras Negras and join the

Carranza group. The anticipated removal of Huerta took place in 1914 but the honeymoon between Carranza and Vasconcelos was of short duration.

VASCONCELOS OPPOSES CARRANZA

The arrival of Carranza on the scene did not resolve the problem of revolutionary goals. Leaders of revolutions in all parts of Mexico had their own answers and some had none, except to do battle. Carranza was fully aware of the fact that his support rested on very shaky grounds and in a Madero-like fashion he opted to move slowly and moderately in pushing for reforms. Such behavior caused disenchantment among his supporters.

The disenchantment of Vasconcelos came shortly after Carranza took over the reins of government. Vasconcelos had accepted the directorship of the National Preparatory School in Mexico City, only to resign after two weeks. He had antagonized the president by refusing to announce in public that he was a staunch supporter of the regime. Again the government's answer was imprisonment. Fortunately the time in prison was brief since Vasconcelos was able to make a dramatic escape and flee to Aguascalientes.

His activities in Aguascalientes only added fuel to the fire. In October of 1914, revolutionary groups met in a convention. The opponents of Carranza won the day and nominated General Eulalio Gutíerrez provisional president. Gutiérrez had the support of a small number of intellectuals, including Vasconcelos, who drafted a legal brief defending the convention as a sovereign body. But the provisional president lacked the military support that Carranza enjoyed, especially when the very capable General Alvaro Obregón from Sonora threw his full support behind Carranza. For a short period of time there were two claimants to the presidential throne. Vasconcelos who supported Gutiérrez was given the post of secretary of public instruction. He also traveled to Washington, D.C., to work for the Gutiérrez government and prevent United States recognition of the Carranza administration. He believed that the United States should remain neutral towards the revolutionary struggles in Mexico. Recognition, for him, meant foreign intervention in

Mexican internal affairs. The Washington mission was doomed to failure since Washington realized that Carranza had the military support to force his presidency on the Mexican nation. As the defeat of the Gutiérrez government became inevitable in 1915, exile was once more the lot of Vasconcelos. He did not return to Mexico until 1920 when Carranza fell from power.

The protracted exile period enabled Vasconcelos to travel extensively in the United States and South America. The first stopover was New York where he spent much time in the public library and in the Columbia University library. Readings and study in these centers provided him with time to prepare himself for lecture tours in the United States and South America and the publication of his first philosophical work in 1916 entitled *Pitágoras*, which stressed the theme of unity in numbers. The search for unity in diversity became a common trait in all his philosophical speculation. *Pitágoras* was followed by a series of essays published the following year and titled *El monismo estético*. Again it was the theme of unity which he argued cannot be achieved by abstract thought but rather by aesthetic emotion. To him knowledge without emotion was incomplete. All true knowledge therefore had to be informed by emotion. The year 1917 also witnessed the publication of *Estudios indostánicos*, in which he desired to inform his Latin American readers about Hindu philosophy. During the earlier part of his life, he was very much attracted to Hindu philosophical speculation but later he lost interest in the subject.

Writings and lectures did not provide an adequate income. In fact, by the end of 1916, he was hard pressed for financial resources. He secured the position of a company representative for the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton, Pennsylvania, in Peru. The position was of short duration since by 1917 he was back in San Diego, California, practicing law. At the same time he became involved in a business venture in Lower California, which at the time was under the control of Federico Cantú, an enemy of Carranza. The venture proved to be lucrative since it involved shipping goods to the United States during the war years and continued so until the end of the war in 1918. After this he briefly returned to New York and then back to Redondo Beach, California, where he devoted himself to writing.

During the time of his two California residences he completed his *Divagaciones literarias* (1917). The work was a series of essays, in which he described California sunsets and nature scenes. The theme was the use of natural phenomena to stimulate philosophical meditations. In addition he continued to write anti-Carranza articles, some of which appeared in *La Prensa* of San Antonio, Texas. This publication was frequently utilized by Mexican exiles to attack the Mexican government.

The Carranza years witnessed an important event--namely the drafting of the Constitution of 1917 in Querétaro. It retained many of the provisions of the Mexican constitutions of 1824 and 1857. It kept the federalist system established by the 1824 consititution and reiterated in the 1857 one. Similarly many of the religious reform provisions of the 1857 constitution can be found in the 1917 document with significant difference being that the 1917 religious constitutional provisions were more restrictive for the Church than were the earlier ones. The most important changes occurred in the area of socioeconomic reforms, such as the call for the division of large landed estates, guaranteeing the rights of workers and declaring all subsoil resources to be the property of the state. Many of the socioeconomic reforms met the approval of Vasconcelos. He, like other Mexican citizens, opposed foreign domination of Mexican economic resources that had become a trademark of the Díaz era.

The Constitution of 1917 may have been one of the few bright spots for Vasconcelos during this period of exile. There was much in the document that was not to the liking of the Carranzistas since their program was more oriented to political reform than socioeconomic innovation. Furthermore it did not strengthen the executive branch to the degree that Carranza wanted. Failure to implement the new constitution must be considered a major factor in the downfall of the Carranza government in 1920. The fall became inevitable when the president lost the military support of General Alvaro Obregón.

Growing opposition to the Carranza government was welcome news to Vasconcelos. From his place of residence in San Diego, California, he supported Obregón in the struggle against the government. As usual his pen was always ready to fight corrupt government. The result was his *Prometeo vencedor*

published in 1918. It was a tragedy written in Greek style but its application to Mexican politics was obvious. His hatred for Carranza was reiterated in the second volume of his autobiography, entitled *La tormenta* (1936).

His criticism of Carranza also faulted the United States for recognizing the regime. He claimed President Wilson should have recognized no faction, thereby forcing the rival groups to come together in the selection of a president. Once the United States president recognized Carranza, it offered this regime the advantage of purchasing needed supplies from the United States to remain in power.

Disagreement with Wilson's Mexican policy did not stop him from declaring Wilson to be one of the founders of true Pan Americanism. He praised him for not succumbing to the dollar diplomacy that frequently characterized United States relations with her southern neighbors. For these reasons he felt that Latin Americans will remember this president kindly.

The long years of exile were finally coming to an end. The assassination of Carranza on May 21, 1920, hastened Vasconcelos's return to his native land. His support of the Obregón group paid dividends since it offered him the opportunity of becoming the minister of education.

EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

The successful overthrow of the Carranza government in May of 1920 resulted in the interim presidency of Adolfo de la Huerta, who governed until December. On the first of that month the newly elected president, Alvaro Obregón, took over the reins of government.

It was during the interim administration of de la Huerta that Vasconcelos was appointed rector of the national university in Mexico City. He lost no time to effect reforms that he felt necessary to upgrade the academic program. The first move was the displacement of Protestant professors, whom he considered anti-Hispanic in their thinking. He tightened professional requirements for both faculty, students and founded a summer school to attract foreign students.

The rectorship provided him with the opportunity to develop

a plan for a national ministry of education. To make the plan acceptable he traveled throughout the republic convincing local educators and political leaders that a more centralized system of education with federal support would help alleviate the serious educational deficiencies, particularly in rural areas where there was widespread illiteracy.

Vasconcelos, in arguing his cause of federal support for education, faced opposition from the states, which traditionally held that education was in their domain. The rector's position was further weakened by the fact that the Constitution of 1917 specifically did not delegate such powers to the central government. Therefore the first order of business was a consitutional amendment granting the national government the desired power. An amendment required the support of twenty-eight state legislatures and for this reason Vasconcelos spent much time while rector convincing state legislators of the need for the amendment. Actually the rector was not advocating a radical innovation in granting the central government expanded powers in the area of education. Shortly after the overthrow of Díaz, the Mexican congress under the interim presidency of Francisco León de la Barra passed the Law of Rudimentary Education on June 1, 1911. It authorized the central government to establish rural schools for Indians. It was the last gasp of a dying regime and never was implemented due to lack of funds. Even if funded, it would have meant one rural school for every 38,000 illiterates! Vasconcelos had no intention of repeating such a halfhearted attempt. For him the revolution never could be a success if the federal government continued to be delinquent in giving its fullest support to the education of its citizens. According to Vasconcelos

> no matter how much I should and do recognize the wisdom and knowledge of many professors, I . . . believe that any state . . . that permits extreme neglect to live side by side with great knowledge or wealth is . . . cruel, unjust, and totally barbarous.8

Even before the establishment of a federal ministry of education, Vasconcelos started implementing educational reforms in the federal district, where the constitution delegated educational powers to the central government. With an appropriation of eighteen million pesos under the de la Huerta

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

government he built local schools and obtained the old convent of La Encarnación in which to house the anticipated ministry of education. Not only did he push the learning of reading and writing but he also insisted on teaching basic lessons of hygiene to children and providing students with free breakfasts. These initial educational efforts must have impressed the congressmen, who at the time were discussing Vasconcelos's proposed amendment to the constitution. The amendment passed and the ministry of education was established in July of 1921. To no one's surprise the president asked Vasconcelos to head the new ministry. As head of the office he inaugurated some of the most innovative and productive educational programs in the history of Mexico. As a result some writers have called him the father of modern public education in Mexico.

The new minister of education quickly dispelled fears that he was merely an idealist when it came to reforming the educational system. For him thinking and action went hand in hand. Philosophy and research without practical application were seen as useless. This attitude is very evident in a remark he made to a researcher.

> For goodness' sake, don't give ideas; ideas I create myself, or I buy them in pamphlets for fifty cents; give me creative activity! Don't tell me what the Indians are like, I know what they're like; they suffer hunger of body and soul; don't tell me what life is like in the poor parts of town; I don't spend my time in the cabinet meetings, I visit the poor; I don't need reports. What the country needs is people who know what must be done and sincerely devote themselves to doing it![9]

In the educator's list of priorities good teachers, books and teaching tools were more essential than theories and politicians, many of whom he declared failures in resolving the nation's educational crisis.

Vasconcelos adopted the motto "to educate is to redeem" in inaugurating his educational program. As minister of education, he provided leadership, personal drive and follow-through that was a novelty in Mexican political circles. His activities included the planning of publications, such as the pedagogical journals, *El Maestro* and *El Libro y el Pueblo* to aid teachers in their instruction. He pushed the popular arts, declared war on

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

illiteracy and promoted vocational instruction. Schools and libraries were opened and the development of a national art program was pushed to combat diversity of native languages, illiteracy and inertia of public indifference. At the same time, he planned to set up adequate teacher training centers and revise rural educational programs. In carrying out this work, he had both the support of de la Huerta and Obregón as can be seen in the continued increase of federal expenditures for education. Under the presidency of Carranza the federal budget for education was one percent. By 1922 it had climbed to twelve percent and the following year it stood at fifteen percent.

When the ministry of education was officially established in 1921, Vasconcelos organized the ministry into three main divisions: (a) Department of Schools to teach scientific and technical education as well as theory, (b) Department of Libraries to provide reading and education for adults and those unable to attend school and (c) Department of Fine Arts to promote artistic culture, such as singing, drawing, gymnastics and the study of the arts. To these three departments he added a fourth called the Department of Indigenous Education, whose main function was to prepare the Indians for entry into public schools. Vasconcelos was a strong believer in integration and opposed the segregation policies then practiced in the United States.

The minister followed one of the cardinal rules of good administration; that is, surrounding himself with competent personnel. Two such men were Moisés Sáenz and Rafael Ramírez. The former was very knowledgeable in Indian culture and thus could provide much practical application to the Vasconcelos program. Another helpful source was the Mexican anthropologist, Manuel Gamio, who headed Obregón's Bureau of Anthropology. The Bureau's research into the pre-Colombian past provided invaluable insights into the culture of these people which then became an integral part of the new educational program. The stress on the Indian's past served as a balance to Vasconcelos's focus on Hispanic culture.

To inaugurate an educational revolution demanded teachers and for Vasconcelos this became the first priority. In the eyes of the educator these teachers had to have the spirit of the early Spanish missionaries who brought education to the Indians

rather than expect the Indians to come to the urban centers for self-improvement. This lay group of missionaries he recruited from the university and teacher preparatory school in Mexico City, many of whom had fought in the ranks of the revolutionary forces of Zapata, Villa and Obregón. From such a background he expected persons committed to revolutionary ideals and experienced in the hardships and rigors of rural life. Like true missionaries they were to carry the message of education to the countryside, organize rural schools and train teachers for these schools. Their duties were clearly spelled out in a ministry publication:

> The first task entrusted to the missioners was that of visiting the rural Indian centers of the Republic, of submitting reports regarding the educational condition of the Indians, of intensifying their campaign against illiteracy, and of concentrating rural teachers in zones where the density of Indian population was the greatest. The missioners were charged with the task of recommending the type of education which should be made available to native groups, of observing their economic condition, of selecting rural teachers, of studying native industries and the ways of encouraging them; moreover, [they were charged with] organizing a permanent exposition of the native products and with co-operating with the agronomists of the Secretariat of Agriculture in the study of lands, of the cultivation of crops, of climate, and of communication and salaries. Even then it was thought that both the missioner and the resident teacher should learn the native language of the group, know the economic conditions of the region and prepare teachers from among the Indians themselves.10

These missionaries of the twentieth century like their counterpart, the religious missionaries of the colonial era, had to be all things to all men. Their role was administrator, supervisor, teacher, researcher and philosopher.

Vasconcelos's missionaries had few precedents to guide them and therefore operated without guidelines. It was mainly experimental and varied from place to place depending upon local conditions. Added to this obstacle was the lack of adequate funds for the construction of rural schools and the retraining of teachers, who frequently had less than three years of elementary instruction. In some areas the missionaries discovered that no school ever existed. These early encounters convinced them that the first order of business was to ingratiate themselves with the people in order to gain their cooperation in starting an

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

educational program. Through such cooperation the educators hoped to receive donations of land from the community on which to build a school and also obtain workers to construct the school. It ended up being a joint venture between the missionaries and the community people in building a school which was called "the house of the people".

"The house of people" was for everybody. The children attended during the day and adults went to school at night. The curriculum embodied both practical and traditional subjects. Due to limited hours of attendance no educational frills were allowed. The course of studies included reading, writing, simple arithmetic, geography, national history and vocational training. The curriculum was designed to meet the needs of the community.

Much of the work in implementing the program was done by Sáenz and Ramírez. In fact, the continued success of the program was the work of these men after Vasconcelos left the ministry in 1924. Both believed strongly that non-academic subjects needed greater stress since local needs demanded it. With their help nurses and doctors were brought in as well as good drinking water. To develop good health habits the educational program encouraged bathing and athletics. Sáenz and Ramírez initiated a campaign against the evils of alcoholism by opening theaters, which provided entertainment that could compete with the traditional local tavern.

Vasconcelos had initiated the program with seventy-seven missionaries, but this number was obviously inadequate to resolve the country's educational needs. During the early days of the program the lay missionaries selected teachers from the local community who were strongly committed to the goals of the Revolution. These teachers had the minimum skill of reading and writing but little formal instruction. They did have good common sense which became a trademark of the Vasconcelos program. The minister realized that to make the program truly successful a more formal and intensive program was needed for these rural teachers. The type of training that the minister envisioned included knowledge in the construction of schools, curriculum development, agriculture, adult education and sanitation, just to mention a few. In starting the program

Vasconcelos inaugurated his cultural mission project in the fall of 1923 in Zacualtipán, Hidalgo. It was no surprise to find that the minister appointed Ramírez to head the program.

Ramírez was an admirer of John Dewey's principle of learning by doing. He quickly ascertained the needs of the community and trained the teachers to meet these needs. For instance the seven teachers in the cultural mission became specialists in soap making, tanning, health, physical education, agriculture and music. The small core of mission teachers trained the local teachers in these skills in addition to basic academic skills such as reading and writing.

The initial success with the mission prompted the director in the middle of 1924 to set up a second cultural mission in Cuernavaca. The teaching staff at the second mission had specialists in agronomy, carpentry and home economics, which were deemed the greatest needs in the area. The proved success of the second mission was amply demonstrated by an exhibit of the achievements of the mission within three weeks after its initiation.

As other missions were founded, teachers with different crafts and professions were added but always with the intent of meeting specific local needs. By the end of 1924 there were six cultural missions in existence.

As the ministry of education gained more experience with the cultural missions, two major functions of the program became very clear; namely the cultural and professional betterment of teachers in the rural community and the improvement of the cultural, economic and social life of the community served by the mission. The fulfillment of the twofold functions involved the mission personnel in varied activities. First the mission served as a training center for the cultural and professional improvement of teachers. In this role the agency supplemented normal school training for teachers who had not completed their academic courses at a teacher preparatory institution. Examinations were administered to certify these teachers. At the same time, the mission desired to inspire the teachers with a sense of duty in changing the unjust social order in the community. Thus the training program included a heavy emphasis on socialistic philosophy and practices needed for the social and economic

rehabilitation of the masses.

Other added roles of the mission were to serve as a supervisory body over educational institutions within its zone of activity and a social welfare agency to improve the social and economic life. To carry out these roles effectively, the mission center became a clearing house for educational material relating to the economic and cultural needs of the community.

As already noted, each mission was headed by a director, who had the responsibility of coordinating the activities of the center. He was assisted by a rural organizer or agricultural social worker, whose duty was to work for agricultural improvement and better marketing for the community's products. He took an active lead in developing civic organizations to better the social and economic life of the farmers.

Other staff personnel of the center included a woman social worker who offered counseling in family life and a nurse to provide midwifery services and advice on health and sanitation.

The mission's cultural role was attended to by the music teacher who provided lessons and organized music festivals. There also was the plastic arts instructor to offer lessons in painting, drawing and crafts. Open-air theaters were opened with puppet shows to further cultural activities in the community.

Finally there was a mechanic who performed various tasks around the center. For instance, as the centers introduced more sophisticated teaching techniques, such as the use of motion pictures, it was his responsibility to operate the projector.

A chief qualification of all mission personnel was a complete devotion to the educational reform program. Equally important was the requirement for a sympathetic understanding of the people with whom they worked. In addition to these qualifications they had to undergo a formal course of instruction which included courses in socialistic philosophy, history of labor movements in Mexico and elsewhere, Mexican labor and agrarian legislation, proletarian art and literature, the history of religion, modern educational theories, social and economic history and cooperatives. The use of cooperatives, whereby people form corporations and share their resources, were deemed by the ministry as highly essential in improving the socioeconomic well-being of the community.

The formal training was supplemented with professional courses which were to prepare the personnel for specific tasks in the cultural missions. The professional training included the teaching of the social sciences on the elementary level with a socialistic orientation. There were courses designed for the training of nurses, physical education instructors and school administrators. A special program provided training for organizers of cooperatives in procedures and accounting methods. The teaching of specialists in agriculture received much attention. The instruction involved the study of agricultural theories, practices and machinery as well as conservation of natural resources. Related to agricultural education were courses in the setting up of *ejidos*. The *ejido* was part of the agrarian reform program stated in the Constitution of 1917. This agrarian innovation had its roots in the colonial era of Mexico and provided that certain land be set aside for communal use. Finally the need for labor organizations was not overlooked since the professional instruction included courses in the theory and practice of labor unions.

The training program for the cultural mission staff reflected a strong emphasis on practical aspects, with particular focus on the individualized needs of the community. Vasconcelos, like the religious missionaries of the colonial era, realized full well that man's spiritual and aesthetic aspirations cannot be fulfilled if he lacks the basic needs for a decent life. As the cultural missions developed, the aesthetic aspects of the program came more into evidence. This can be seen when one studies a cultural mission in operation.

A cultural mission compares favorably with present day in-service training for teachers. The first missions lasted a couple of weeks, hardly sufficient time for the lay missionaries to do their work. In a short time the period was increased to eight weeks and in the 1930's some missions lasted as long as four months.

Although the original intent of the program was to improve the training of teachers, the missionaries gradually made their knowledge and skill available to the entire community. In short the mission became a learning and demonstration center for old and young alike.

Once an area was selected for a cultural mission, a local rural school was designated as the headquarters for the mission. The size of the area varied depending on the distance teachers had to travel to the center. The first task of the missionary was to familiarize himself with the social and economic conditions of the region. In addition the cultural missionary was instructed to establish rapport with the local teachers, who were expected to serve as the hosts for the cultural mission. At the same time it was the responsibility of the mission personnel to interest the peasants in education and other projects that would be beneficial to the community, such as the marketing of crops and the introduction of electricity. After this initial period lasting from ten to fifteen days, it was hoped that the cultural missionaries would lose their image of strangers.

When a cultural mission moved into a designated area, the rural schools in the district were closed to enable the teachers to attend the in-service training sessions. The teachers from the outlying areas lived at the mission headquarters or stayed with families in the town where the cultural mission was located. This enabled the teachers to foster a close rapport with the local inhabitants.

The training session schedule provided little time for leisure. The first institutes lasted at the most six weeks. The schedule of events started at 6:00 A.M. and terminated at 9:00 P.M. Theory and practical experience went hand in hand and covered such subjects as agriculture, hygiene, plastic arts, music, work in the community, setting up of cooperatives, and sports. Other activities included library reading, participation in community festivals and the visitation of schools and communities in the mission district.

Although the main intent of the cultural mission was to provide in-service training for teachers, the schedule of events makes it clear that the mission should benefit both old and young in the community. In fact, it ended up being an experimental laboratory for the social and economic development of the community. What the cultural mission started, the rural schools were expected to develop and expand after the departure of the cultural missionaries.

Frequently the cultural mission goals were too idealistic for

implementation during the brief time of in-service training. Nevertheless, there were many positive achievements, among which can be cited the following: construction of cornmeal mills, water wheels for providing electricity, sanitary water systems, roads, irrigation ditches, model homes and cattle fences.

The missionaries realized that life need not always be drab and with this in mind they helped in building open-air theaters and athletic fields. It was in keeping with Vasconcelos's plan to replace the *cantina* with theaters and sports.

The cultural mission had one goal in mind; namely, to improve the lot of the rural people and in carrying out this role no stone was left unturned. If the people had grievances against governmental officials, it was the duty of the missionary to help draft petitions and see to it that the proper authorities were made aware of the complaints. In the early history of Mexico, the Spanish *padres* had performed many of these roles. Now it was the work of Vasconcelos's lay missionaries.

As every need of the local community became the concern of Vasconcelos's teachers, so every method of instructional media was utilized in educating the people. Radio and motion pictures became devices for instruction. Music teachers organized orchestras that provided concerts for festivals and athletic events. Physical education teachers were in charge of sports events and utilized athletic tournaments among villages to end rural isolation and village feuds of long standing. The missionary teacher not only taught painting but took his students to paint and decorate homes of the inhabitants as well as wall paintings in local schools, open-air theaters and local churches which no longer were used for religious services. Frequently these church structures were converted into theaters.

The termination of a cultural mission training session was celebrated with examinations and festivals. State and national officials were in attendance and the festivities afforded the people a sense of pride for their achievements. After this occasion the cultural missionaries prepared for their departure by giving final instructions to the local teachers and community leaders, who were expected to carry on the works initiated by the in-service program. The lay missionaries were now ready to move on to the next district and set up another in-service program. But the work

of previous cultural missions was never forgotten. First it provided invaluable experience in setting up subsequent programs. Secondly there was a follow-up study whereby communities who had been served by a cultural mission were revisited by the missionary teachers after a two-year absence. In some cases these visitations revealed that more re-education was needed to realize fully the cultural mission goals. At other times the missionary visitors were greatly pleased with the work done by the inhabitants since the departure of the cultural mission.

The cultural mission was not without its opponents. In fact, in a number of the communities the lay missionary armed himself against violent opposition. Some local and national leaders found Vasconcelos and his missionaries too idealistic in their aspirations. There was a widespread belief among elite groups to consider the Indians and rural people backward and generally unredeemable when it came to improving their lot in life. The success story of many cultural missions disproved this elitist attitude. Further opposition came from some clergymen who saw the school and the lay missionary usurping the traditional role of the padre and spreading socialistic ideas. One local pastor claimed that cultural mission activities drew his parishioners away religious services, especially when the mission festivities were held on Sundays. To this the minister of education answered that the declining religious service attendance was the fault of the Church which had failed to meet the needs of the people. After all he saw no reason why people should sit and listen to dull Sunday sermons when there were many more interesting activities going on at the cultural mission center. For Vasconcelos the mission was nothing more than what the early Spanish missionaries had started but was not continued by subsequent Church leaders.

Critics of Vasconcelos were always quick to find deficiencies in his educational program. One of the most popular criticisms was the complaint that the man himself and his programs were too idealistic. Yet the study of the cultural mission as described above proves the exact opposite. His program always endeavored to combine the practical with the theoretical; the material with the spiritual. To do otherwise would destroy the

unity in a person's life, which was the essence of Vasconcelos's thought. This thinking was well stated in his autobiography, *A Mexican Ulysses*. In writing on the education of the Indian he proposed four types of cultural missionaries to go to the Indians: (a) a teacher of crafts, (b) a teacher of fine arts, (c) a reading and arithmetic teacher, and (d) a teacher to arouse people to social action and cooperation. These four types of teachers would select Indians who in turn would become the teachers of the Indians in the community. At the same time the teachers were expected to help the Indians build schools from local resources. The fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic received top priority in the training of Indian teachers as did instruction in agriculture and crafts. Vasconcelos also proposed the training a public reader who periodically would go to the plaza and read chapters from history, geography, newspapers and show films. These activities were to be carried out to the accompaniment of music.[11] At the heart of the Vasconcelos instructional program was the desire to provide an education to meet all of man's aspirations. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in the educational philosophy of the man.

Admirers of Vasconcelos have described him as a "traveling salesman of culture" and the title fits him well. By word and deed he was a living example of man's search for aesthetic values. As minister of education, he distributed 50,000 copies of the classics as well as textbooks. The classics included the writings of Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, Cervantes, and other great writers in Western culture. One of his favorites was Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. He imported 200,000 inexpensive editions and ordered that every school in the country have a copy. To the surprise of many but certainly not to Vasconcelos the copies sold well not only in Mexico but in all of Latin America. He hoped that the wide distribution of the "popular classics" would discourage petty Mexican nationalism. The critics of the project could not envision the backward and illiterate country folk reading classics. No doubt in the early 1920's the vast majority of the Mexican people could not read, but it does show the minister's

confidence in his people's willingness to learn the best that Western culture had to offer.

If the people could not read, Vasconcelos found other means besides school to educate people. The importance of painting has already been noted in the cultural mission, but the minister believed that painting must go beyond the classroom walls. Painting in his thinking was for the people and not for the select few who could afford it. He conceived the idea on a trip through Italy where he saw the great Italian tradition in art. He became convinced that this tradition must be utilized to serve the Mexican Revolution. It was not "art for art's sake" but art that expressed ideals that had significance for mankind. Just as the medieval Church inspired the painter to paint for the masses so the Mexican Revolution can renovate all of Mexican life and provide ideals for the new generation of Mexican painters. No longer should painting be confined to wealthy drawing rooms or be a product of pseudo-French academies. The most effective device in bringing the Mexican revolutionary message to the people was the fresco. Besides its aesthetic value, Vasconcelos believed frescoes were less easy to steal and be sold in the United States. It was Vasconcelos who in the 1920's encouraged the great painters Diego Rivera, Clemente Orozco and David Siqueiros, to paint their masterpieces. it was the start of a movement that has given Mexico worldwide renown in the 20th century.

Vasconcelos was a great lover of music. In the achievement of unity and harmony he found in music a perfect example. Here musicians with different instruments combine their efforts to achieve a harmonious whole, as for example in a symphonic orchestra. Just as he brought the great classics to the people so also he fostered the bringing of musical masterpeices to the people. He provided a government subsidy for a symphony orchestra to travel around the republic giving concerts. He also subsidized symphony orchestras in Mexico City and Guadalajara. In addition he organized some eighty choral groups to perform in open-air theaters and stadiums. Whether it was literature, painting or music, the minister felt all of these were essential to satisfy the aesthetic aspirations of mankind but never to the exclusion of the practical arts. Vasconcelos described his

aesthetic goals as "aesthetic monism", in which all cultural agencies--art, music, museums and literature--contributed to education. But he also was a realist who understood that man must satisfy his basic material wants before he can achieve aesthetic satisfaction.

The minister of education showed himself to be an arch foe of pragmatism as it was being practiced in North American schools. He was, for instance, highly critical of John Dewey's "learn by doing". Yet his own educational reform frequently reflected the practical advice of the North American educator. Perhaps Vasconcelos did not always distinguish between the master and his disciples who carried educational pragmatism to extremes. According to the Mexican educator, the Dewey group lacked a sense of academic discipline and therefore failed to develop in students a respect for tradition in Western culture. Such an educational philosophy never provided for an understanding of classical literature but rather fostered religious agnosticism and petty nationalism. It left a student as a slave to his environment without exposing him to universal ideas.

Not only did he consider these to be defects in the educational system of his northern neighbor, but he also found similar shortcomings among the leaders of the Mexican Revolution. He criticized these men for their uncritical exaltation of things Mexican as well as their cultural and political xenophobia. Vasconcelos was too much of a humanist to be bound by thinking that glorified the state and nationalism.

As a young man he had shown his opposition to educational pragmatism. This, as already noted, was evidenced in his activities as a member of the Ateneo de la Juventud which attacked the pragmatic Positivism of the *científicos* under Díaz. In 1935 he published a work on education, entitled *De Robinson a Odiseo*, in which he vented his opposition to educational pragmatism. The work was critical of Dewey's "learn by doing" and debated the value of vocational training as symbolized by Robinson Crusoe and liberal education represented by Odysseus. Admittedly Robinson Crusoe survived on his lonely island by learning to do practical things but his state of life remained primitive. This he declared to be no model for the Latin American people. Rather a "new Odysseus" is the type of person

to be admired and imitated. This type is not trained solely for the enjoyment of material things but rather to learn ideas and thereby enjoy the fullness that life has to offer.

Writers who have studied the period of the ministry of education under Vasconcelos have found him to be a very productive man both in regard to his educational proposals and implementation of pedagogical programs. Unfortunately this brief treatise cannot do justice to all of his thought and achievements. The productivity of his ministry becomes even more striking when one considers the fact that he resigned the post in 1924 after only a three year tenure.

At the time of the appointment to the post he was an admirer of President Obregón, but this no longer was the case when he resigned in 1924. A major factor in the loss of admiration was Obregón's policy of seeking United States recognition of his administration. Vasconcelos felt that such recognition was not necessary. When Obregón finally received the desired recognition in 1923, Vasconcelos was convinced it was done at a very high price, namely, offering foreign investors indemnifications. These investors, he felt, already had too many concessions. In fact, their property should have been expropriated in accordance with the Constitution of 1917. Through recognition the president received the assurance from the United States not to permit aid to Mexican rebels. Recognition also offered the possibility of purchasing military supplies from the northern power to suppress any potential uprising.

Another bone of contention between the two men was Vasconcelos's decision to run for the governorship of his home state of Oaxaca, when he resigned from the ministry in 1924. Obregón never backed him in this venture but supported the Plutarco Calles faction, who wanted their own man for the position. The Mexican thinker claimed fraud in the election but to no avail. The relation between the president and the minister further deteriorated when the former supported Calles as the next president. One of the minister's first actions was to resign as honorary vice-president of the National Agrarian Party, which favored the candidacy of Calles. Vasconcelos considered the man totally unfit for the presidency, in fact some of his most caustic comments in his writings were aimed at the Calles

administration that governed Mexico from 1924 to 1928. As an example, he started publishing the weekly *La Antorcha* which attacked the Mexican government and dictatorship in general, especially in Latin America.

According to Vasconcelos, Obregón feared the rising power of the Vasconcelos group. Should Vasconcelos achieve victory in Oaxaca, the presidency was the next inevitable step. The minister admitted his presidential ambition but argued that his victory would not mean the elimination of the Obregón group. In fact, he assured the president that he would continue to be an influential person should Vasconcelos become president. Apparently Obregón thought otherwise and as a result threw in his lot with the Calles faction. For Vasconcelos it meant exile since President Calles did not tolerate opposition that might threaten the political stability of the republic.

When Vasconcelos resigned from the ministry of education in July of 1924, he was succeeded by Bernardo J.Gastellum.He left an enviable record in educational innovation. His cultural mission program continued and was expanded until the late years of the Lázaro Cárdenas administration in the 1930's. In fact, even after the Cárdenas years certain aspects of the program were reintroduced at various times. Another concrete example of his educational legacy was the establishment of rural schools where none had never existed.

During the Vasconcelos ministry from 1921 to 1924 more than a thousand rural schools were built. Obviously this was a drop in the bucket for the dire educational needs of the country, but the achievement is truly startling when one takes into account that this was more than the rural schools started during the fifty years preceding the presidency of Obregón.

The expanded educational program, particularly in rural areas, was most obvious in federal funding. During the Carranza presidency (1916-1920) one percent of the federal budget went to education. Between 1920 to 1923 Vasconcelos increased federal expenditures on education to fifteen percent.

The increased federal expenditure on education went beyond the traditional classroom instruction. We have seen his work in distributing inexpensive editions of the classics. He pushed anti-illiteracy drives, cultural movements, and popular arts. His support of the muralists such as Diego Rivera and José Clemente

Orozco initiated a painting movement that brought international fame to the republic.

Perhaps Vasconcelos should have continued as minister of education to develop many of his innovative programs. This he considered impossible with the arrival of Calles as president. He was convinced that the true goals of the Mexican Revolution as he saw them could only be achieved by seeking the presidency. Such was not to be his lot in the Mexican political arena but no one should fault him for trying. The opportunity for throwing his hat into the presidential race did not arrive until 1929. During the intervening years from 1924 to 1929 it was another period of exile. These were not unproductive years, since exile afforded him the opportunity to travel, think and write.

EXILE UNDER CALLES

His first year of exile in 1925 was spent in France and Spain. His residence in Europe brought him in contact with European intellectuals, such as José Ortega y Gasset, Américo Castro and Miguel de Unamuno. The following year he accepted a teaching position at the University of Puerto Rico and next he moved to the University of Chicago. In 1927 it was back to Europe again, spending much time in Italy and Constantinople, where he studied mosaics. It was his desire to see a revival of this form of art. The year 1928 saw his return to the University of Chicago to continue his lecture series on Latin American sociology. These lectures, as will be seen later, revolved around the theme of "la raza cósmica", namely that the Latin American peoples are multicultural and multiracial. In addition to the University of Chicago lectures, he gave a series of lectures at Stanford University. It was during this time that he began preparing his book entitled *Metafísica* (1929).

During his exile residence in Madrid, Spain, he wrote one of his best known works, entitled *La raza cósmica*, published in 1925. Herein he briefly outlined his ideas on the cultural and racial mixtures of the Latin American people. This also was a central theme in his lectures on Latin America sociology given at the University of Chicago and in his *Indología* (1927) and *Bolivarismo y Monroísmo* (1934).

The historical experience of a "cosmic race" in the western hemisphere became Vasconcelos's lifetime search for unity amidst diversity. For him there was no compartmentalized knowledge, but rather he sought to unite diverse areas of knowledge such as history, economics, anthropology, law, etc., in order to see the overall picture. He criticized both Marxists and Darwinists; the former because they sought unity based solely on an economic base; the latter who argued unity on biological grounds. He condemned the scientific historians whose sole concern was with details and empirical data but failed to see universal patterns in the historical process. It was his intent in *La raza cósmica* to present the overall picture and to outline direction, rhythm and purpose in the history of mankind. The work is not an analysis in the scientific sense of taking things apart but rather a synthesis and creation mixed with a sense of prophecy concerning the racial and cultural fusion in the Americas.

According to the Mexican philosopher the Latin American people are a racial mixture of black (African), red (Indian), yellow (Oriental), and white (European). The white group for him was the transitional race through whose conquest and colonization and technical means there resulted a fusion and a new fifth race, which he called "the cosmic race" or the mestizo Latin Americans.

He described the fusion as a threefold development. The first period in mankind's history was the material and warfare stage wherein racial mixtures took place due to conquest and force. The next stage he defined as intellectual or political. Conquest was still utilized but national states employed treaties to decree rules for racial mixtures. He denied that such mixtures were voluntary but rather were forced by unquestioned guides of conduct, be they civil or religious. The final stage was the voluntary mixture of races. Here fusion was based on attraction and the mutual search for pleasure or satisfaction, not on the abuse of one race by another. It was humanity acting out of love. He admitted that the third stage was a most difficult one and that Latin America with its mestizo people was in the third stage or the "fifth race".

During the epoch of the "fifth race", man will be governed by

emotions and aesthetics, both essential to an atmosphere for racial fusion. He argued that in this age love will be the prime factor in attracting people to each other and not necessity, as was the case in an earlier stage when the Spaniard arrived and took an Indian wife. The optimism of the fusion of the best in each race carried Vasconcelos to the conclusion that the persons with the best racial traits of one group will marry a person with the best traits of another group. He failed to designate the criteria for determining the superior racial traits. He did condemn the white race for claiming that all superior traits belonged to it. This claim he saw as one of the causes for the inferiority feeling of the Latin American people. This feeling must be uprooted and supplanted by Christian love, which is essential for bringing about a universal race. Since Latin America was already on its way towards a mestizo race and because of its Christian heritage, it is best suited for the mission in the third stage.

Vasconcelos's writings stressed Spanish and Indian traits in the mestizo process. He argued that the Spaniards did not isolate themselves from the Indians and destroy their culture as was the case in the United States. The reason for the difference between Spaniards and Anglo Americans regarding relations with Indians was due to Spanish Catholicism, which he said gave the Indian a soul.

An Hispanic bias is obviously evident in the thinking of Vasconcelos. He declared that Latin Americans will never be great until they feel as Spanish as the sons of Spain. At the same time he was ready to defend the Indians against the white man's prejudiced views. If the Indian is backward, it is due to his economic condition. He considered the mental and moral aptitudes of the indigenous people equal to any race. If the mestizo has ugly features, it is due to the misery under which he is forced to live. Therefore the Indians, as the Spaniards, have made significant contributions to the mestizo race, which he considered superior to a pure race.

> The so-called pure-race theory is nothing but the theory of the dominating people of every period of history. And the pure-race theory leads, very often almost fatally, to the prenatal marriages, to the incestuous marriages of the Pharoahs. If we observe human nature closely we find that hybridism in man as well as in plants, tends to produce better types and tends to rejuvenate those types that have become static.12

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What are the characteristics of the Latin American hybrid race? The Mexican thinker answered that his race had a vivacious mind and quick understanding but lacked a steady temperament and a persistence of purpose. He went on to add, "From a purely intellectual point of view, I doubt whether there is a race with less prejudice, more ready to take up almost any adventure, more subtle and more varied than the mestizo or halfbreed." [13]

According to Vasconcelos, differences among races is not the difference of their total development, but their ability to do certain things to the exclusion of others. Therefore, through the fusion of the races there will result a rich pool of characteristics and abilities. The deficiencies of a particular race would be made up by another stock. Thus it is necessary for each individual to contribute according to his ability and thereby become a true participant in the advancement of all human beings.

The Mexican thinker had some very harsh words for archeologists who attempted to revitalize the Indian culture and thereby denigrate the Hispanic heritage. He was convinced that this was a North American Protestant plot to destroy the Spanish culture. It made no sense to him to see Protestants discriminating against black people and other races in the United States but at the same time fostering the Indian heritage in Mexico. To confront this so-called Protestant plot Vasconcelos became convinced that the Mexican people must take pride in their mestizo heritage.

Gabriella de Beer summarized the thinking of the man well when she wrote:

> Let no Mexican feel shame or inferiority when he is classified with the non-white population; let him feel pride at being a Mexican--a criollo, mestizo or mulatto; let there be no conflict between the white man and any other; let every Mexican strive for the same cultural level of the white race. In this lies the task of all of Latin America.14

The observation makes it clear that Vasconcelos desired that the Indian become assimilated into the white man's culture, but at the same time he apparently hoped that the desirable traits of the Indian heritage could be retained. In short he felt that the Indian had an inferior culture compared to the European one and

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

this can be rectified by lifting the Indian through education to the white man's culture. Furthermore he wanted no conflict between the races and therefore reminded his people that the white man by blood was their ancestor and by culture their teacher.

The Vasconcelos analysis of racial fusion ran counter to popular sentiments in the United States during the 1920's. A generation that saw the revival of the Ku Klux Klan and a heightened anti-ethnic feeling could find little agreement with the words of the Mexican thinker. Actually Vasconcelos was attacking the melting pot thesis which advocated a melting down of racial and cultural differences with the hope that these differences will eventually disappear. In this sense the North Americans spoke of the desire to become Americanized. Despite this opposing view the Mexican thinker still envisioned the day when the Latin American and the Anglo people would fuse their cultural and racial legacies and develop a true all comprehend-type of civilization. In the Anglo culture Vasconcelos saw technological achievement as one of the great legacies that these people could contribute to the development of the "fifth race" in the western himisphere. The aspiration of seeing the Anglo Americans becoming an integral part of the "fifth race" became less evident in some of his later writings, especially when he criticized Pan Americanism as opposed to "Bolivarismo", which he considered the true union of Latin American people. He simply found too many aspects in the Anglo American heritage that were alien to the cultural legacy of the Latin American people. A Protestant culture versus a Catholic one certainly was not the least of his concerns when he wrote about cultural fusions. [15]

In all of his travels and writings Vasconcelos did not lose sight of significant political developments in Mexico. He still harbored deep resentment against the Calles ruling group. For the Mexican thinker President Calles and his group were nothing more than *pochos*. For instance, when Calles enforced the anticlerical provisions of the Mexican Constitution of 1917 which led to the Cristero Rebellion from 1926 to 1929, Vasconcelos accused him of serving United States Protestant interests, which he claimed sought the destruction of Mexico's Catholic heritage. In the mind of the Mexican thinker *pochismo* was a blending of

United States and Mexican border culture with the end result of the Anglo American culture doing violence to the Mexican culture.

Vasconcelos found fault with the Obregón administration for making a treaty with the United States that granted special concessions to United States citizens who held Mexican property. He also accused the Calles government of permitting foreign holdings in Mexico which according to the Consitution should have been expropriated. In short he found the Mexican presidents of the 1920's too eager in obtaining recognition from the United States and the price for recognition was special concessions to foreigners. Obviously much of Mexico's problem was due to the fact that the country was still too much in the United States' orbit of influence. The Mexican *pensador* was convinced that if the true regeneration of Mexico was to take place, some drastic changes in United States and Mexican relations were in order.

Vasconcelos's desire to become president was part of his plan to bring about changes, which he felt the Calles men failed to achieve. As early as 1927 he reiterated his interest in seeking the presidential office but with the reelection of Obregón in 1928 it was obvious that Calles and Obregón were playing musical chairs with the presidential office. Shortly after the election of 1928, Obregón was assassinated and this opened up the door again since Calles in accordance with the Mexican Constitution was ineligible to serve two consecutive terms. Thus in November of 1928 Vasconcelos reentered Mexico at Nogales on the Mexican and Arizona border to begin his presidential campaign for the election of 1929. In the meantime Emilio Portes Gil, another Calles man, served as interim president. Calles's National Revolutionary Party nominated Pascual Ortiz Rubio to run for the vacant presidential seat.

VASCONCELOS RUNS FOR THE PRESIDENCY

The Mexican philosopher's entry into the political arena may be difficult to understand. If one bears in mind that Vasconcelos believed strongly in the need for creating a new Mexico, the reasons for his political activities become easily comprehensible.

His was a firm conviction that the Mexican Revolution in order to be successful must result in the creation of a new Mexico. The educational reform program, already studied, makes that obvious. But the education of a new generation of Mexicans was bound to remain incomplete if the corrupt political life of the nation remained unchanged. His entry into the presidential race of 1929 was a reform effort at wiping out political corruption and the election of a government truly dedicated to the goals of the revolution, which included better working, living and cultural conditions. Briefly it was a cry to return to the program laid down by Madero. Thus a popular slogan for the campaign became "With Madero yesterday! With Vasconcelos today!".

Even though the presidential candidate had spent much time in exile, he was not a dark horse. He was well-known for his work in the ministry of education and newspaper articles which appeared frequently in Mexico. He also became known among the Mexican American people in the southwest. In fact, the initial preparation for the campaign was done on United States soil. For instance, he aroused audiences against the Calles government in Lost Angeles, which at that time had a Mexican American population of around 200,000. In Laredo, Texas, he met with the anti-Calles General Antonio I. Villarreal from the state of Nuevo León. The two planned to run independently as nominees for the Anti-Reelection Party and the winner would support the other in the presidential race. The campaign plans for the nomination called for the general to enter Mexico via Nuevo Laredo and for Vasconcelos to enter via Nogales, Sonora. The official starting date for the latter's campaign was November 10, 1928.

The campaign speeches for his party's nomination reflected themes that he later used in the presidential race. He stressed the old Madero cry of effective suffrage and no reelection. According to Vasconcelos the Calles group had failed to fulfill the goals of the revolution. He felt that one of Mexico's greatest needs was to become a united nation and thereby better challenge rival threats from abroad. In an obvious reference to the Cristero rebellion,[16] he argued that religious fanaticism needs to be fought with books rather than machine guns. He urged the Cristeros to lay down their arms until after the election.

"If there is to be any revolt at all it should come from the people if they find after the elections that their votes have been disregarded." [17]

Vasconcelos proved to be a popular candidate among students. These formed pro-Vasconcelos clubs in Mexico City and other parts of the republic. Among these young supporters was Adolfo López Mateos, who later served as president of Mexico from 1958 to 1964.

The concentration of the campaign was in the western states of Mexico extending from Sonora to Jalisco. While he was on the campaign tour in Guadalajara he encountered rioters, whom he claimed were instigated by the governor of Jalisco, Margarito Ramírez. Riots of this type and even threats to his life or to the lives of his followers became frequent as the campaign progressed. There probably was justification in Vasconcelos's claims that some local officials were responsible for these acts, but there is also strong evidence to show that the interim president of the country, namely Portes Gil, did much to protect Vasconcelos.

The growing popularity of the Vasconcelos campaign convinced Alessio Robles, a leader in the anti-Reelection Party, that this man was the party's best presidential candidate. He notified Vasconcelos that Villarreal was prepared to concede the nomination. Vasconcelos agreed to accept the party's nomination if an open nominating convention were held and all segments of the party were given a voice in the selection of the nominee.

The Anti-Reelectionist Party held its nominating convention in Mexico City on July 2, 1929. There were 835 delegates who came from all parts of the country. It was obvious that the candidate had the support of the convention. There were minor differences over the party's name which Vasconcelos wanted changed to the National Party of Work since he felt the anti-reelection label was too narrow for the goals the party hoped to achieve. The proceedings terminated with Vasconcelos's nomination by acclamation to the tune of "La Cucaracha".

The campaign proved to be enlightening since it afforded the candidate the opportunity to meet evey strata of society and address the varied problems of his people. A major campaign theme was political corruption and the one man rule of Calles.

Even though Ortiz Rubio was heading the National Revolutionary Party's ticket it was well-known that he was hand-picked by Calles. Vasconcelos called for a return to the basics of democracy by granting more autonomy to municipal government, proportional representation to protect minorities, and recovery of congressional and judicial powers that had been lost to the executive branch. To assure judicial independence, he proposed the popular election of judges.

The social concerns in his speeches reiterated his ideas of "la raza cósmica". It was an obvious attempt to build pride in the Mexican culture. He proposed the building of a monument to symbolize the country's historical heritage, namely the synthesis of the European, Indian and mestizo. This platform did not become a reality until after his death in 1959 with the construction of the Plaza de Tres Culturas in Mexico City.

More specifically his social concerns called for the abolition of alcoholism and improvement of dietary practices. Libraries needed to replace *cantinas*. He attacked the excessive use of meat, fat, and chili. To replace these dietary excesses he called for a greater consumption of fruits, which he argued along with books should have no taxes so that they may be abundant and cheap. Health experts today who are concerned with the dangers of cholesterol certainly can sympathize with the candidate's attacks on the excesses of fat consumption.

In his campaign speeches he touched on the problems of Mexican migrations to the United States. These migrants he compared to wandering Jews. The migrants had the advantage of being exposed to democratic practices in the United States and this experience, he felt, could prove beneficial to their mother country upon their return. On the negative side he faulted his nation's failure to be concerned about the violation of rights of its citizens abroad. Bullfights, he said, were of greater interest to the Mexican government than the plight of Mexicans in the United States.

The fear that Mexican migrants will lose their cultural heritage in the United States was not foreign to the candidate's thinking. For him it was difficult to see the Mexican's being assimilated into the Anglo culture since the two cultures were so opposite. Worse than the fear of losing one's culture was the possibility that a Mexican migrant who became a United States

citizen might be called on to fight his native land. Therefore, he called for a general amnesty for all political exiles in the United States.

To no one's surprise education received much attention in Vasconcelos's campaign remarks. He faulted the government for its failure to adequately subsidize public instruction. He was critical of the government's policy of closing private schools when the nation needed more and better schools. Vocational and technical schools were crying needs. In the future the Mexican farmer, he claimed, will plow with a tractor and like the Iowa farmer he must have the necessary technical training for such innovations. He bitterly remarked that more than once he was laughed at when he recommended founding a school for electricians.

Religion was another theme in the campaign speeches. The armed conflict between the state and Catholics, who called themselves Cristeros, had started in 1926 and reached its final stages during the campaign. This rebellion, according to Vasconcelos, could be terminated with the modification of the antireligious provisions in the Constitution of 1917, just as already had been done with the subsoil rights provisions. By this he meant that the state had modified the implementation of the provision and therefore did not insist on the immediate expropriation of all foreign oil interests in Mexico. If the government was willing to compromise with foreign oil companies, why could it not also reach a compromise with the Mexican Catholic church?

While many of the enemies of the Cristeros saw in the movement a fanatical expression of religious sentiment, Vasconcelos in his defense of religion was far from being a fanatic. He did fear an attack on Mexico's Catholic legacy as a Protestant threat from abroad, but yet some of his religious opinions had a Protestant tinge. For instance, he felt that the Church must be more tolerant in its dogmatic teachings since dogma for him was only an approximation of truth. More tolerance in the area of doctrine and Church law would make it unnecessary for people to leave the Church and join other sects. He could never accept dogma blindly since one always needs to search for truth.

Vasconcelos was perhaps ahead of his religious leaders in Mexico when he argued for a social Christianity. He criticized the Church for being too closely aligned to political and financial interests in the past; for instance, the pope's conferring of honors on dictators. Socialism for Vasconcelos must have a Christian basis; in fact, socialism should be a Christian practice. Such thinking appears to anticipate the later development of Christian socialism in various parts of Latin America.

Vasconcelos's remarks on labor show his concern for working problems. He envisioned the formation of a national labor union to include all workers, but he insisted that such a union must never degenerate into a party subservient to a *caudillo*. He wanted to see a labor exchange system that fits the needs of the different sections of the republic. Another recommendation called for a social security program to cover the vital needs of the workers. These stands on labor brought him labor support, especially from railroad workers.

The sad history of militarism in Mexico and Latin America prompted the presidential candidate to advocate noninvolvement in politics on the part of the military. Rather the military must become a socioeconomic agency that can bring all types of needed education and services to the people. He felt that since the revolutionary armies were close to the people they were in a good position to render these needed services. The army, therefore, will not be an enemy of the people but rather will unite with the people in solving pressing problems.

It would be inconceivable to study Vasconcelos's campaign without commenting on his country's relations with its northern neighbor. He indicated that he was no enemy of the United States, but he described the relations of the United States with Mexico and Latin America as tinged with imperialism. The United States military intervention in Nicaragua and the Congress of Havana of 1928 were merely two cases in point. The meeting in Havana was concerned with the dominating role of the United States in the Pan American Union and North American intervention in Latin American affairs. In short, Vasconcelos saw Pan Americanism as Yankee imperialism. He blamed the Latin American republics for being weak and cowardly and therefore deserved their fate at the hands of the

northern power. What he found true for United States relations with Latin America he found to be doubly true for Mexico. "Texanización," as he called United States imperialism in Mexican history, must be avoided at any cost and Mexico as well as Latin America must struggle to retain their cultural identity. Therefore, Latin America must develop a united front against the cultural, political, military and economic encroachments of the United States.

The attacks on Pan Americansim did not mean that the Latin American countries must isolate themselves from having dealings with their northern neighbor. Rather Vasconcelos wanted the cooperation of all political entities in the western hemisphere, but it was to be at all times a relationship of equality and mutual respect for cultural diversity. For instance, he praised North American universities which sought to establish contacts among citizens throughout the hemisphere. Such contacts he insisted will bring about better inter-American understanding. The cultural exchange programs encouraged by the United States during the post-World War Two era are in keeping with the Mexican thinker's aspirations.

The concern about United States ambitions in Latin America were very evident when the candidate spoke about international economic relations. Vasconcelos wanted an end to unregulated foreign investments in his country. He attacked the Callistas for being more concerned in the 1920's with the paying of foreign debts than in investing in Mexico. According to him the national government must take the lead to invest and develop the nation's resources. If this is not done, Mexico will then remain perpetually dependent on outside powers. He accused the Callistas of selling out in order to gain diplomatic recognition from the northern neighbor. The fact that foreign groups still held considerable resources in Mexico was, according to the candidate, a violation of the Constitution of 1917. Here he had especially in mind the constitutional provision which stated that subsoil resources belonged to the state. Therefore the diplomatic mission of Dwight Morrow, the United States ambassador to Mexico at the time of the campaign, came under severe attack. For Vasconcelos it was another example of a United States effort to dictate political and economic policies for the Mexican people.

The fear of a too great economic dependency on the United States prompted the candidate to call for economic integration of Latin American nations. He reminded his listeners of the proposal of Lucas Alamán, a Mexican political leader during the first half of the 19th century. Alamán desired the formation of a commercial league of Latin American nations to meet the economic challenge of its northern neighbor. Similarly Vasconcelos proposed the formation of an Iberoamerican league outside the Pan American Union to protect the interests of Latin America. The proposal foreshadowed recent developments throughout Latin America where precisely such movements have been initiated; namely, the Central American Common Market and the Latin American Free Trade Association.

In summary the Vasconcelos economic platform called for nationalization of all extractive industries and public utilities, a policy that became a reality during the years following 1938. The nationalized industries should then become autonomous agencies regulated by clearly defined governmental policies. They should be staffed by experts and free from political control. For instance railroad fares should be adjusted to a level that will enable the carrier to distribute products cheaply and efficiently. He admitted the need for foreign credit but any such debts must be contracted to fulfill national economic needs. In short these debts must never hinder the development of the country's economy and must at all times contribute to the productive ends of the country. In short he preached economic nationalism but at the same time a better utilization of national resources and closer economic ties with Latin America.

No candidate could address Mexico's economic problems without referring to one of the most serious and oldest of all problems in Mexico, namely the agrarian question. Vasconcelos fully realized that expropriation or mere distribution of land will not resolve the land problem. He advocated the setting up of farm cooperatives, to which the government must make available easy credit. Furthermore the farmer must be given technical assistance to make the land productive. His agrarian program stressed the production of crops needed by the people rather than emphasizing traditional export crops, such as sugar, cotton, coffee and bananas. Financing of the agricultural

program was to be done by the state through the issuance of bonds. The bonds could later be paid off by tax revenue from increased agricultural production and thus add no further burden to the national debt.

Although the presidential candidate devoted much attention to the socioeconomic problems facing the nation, few of his campaign speeches dealt with the need for industrialization. In all probability this was due to the fact that in 1929 the socioeconomic problems were of more vital concern than industrial development. When speaking about the country's economic development, his concern centered around foreign intervention in the national economy. He wanted to the socioeconomic problems facing the nation, few of his campaign speeches dealt with the need for industrialization. In all probability this was due to the fact that in 1929 the socioeconomic problems were of more vital concern than industrial development. When speaking about the contry's economic development, his concern centered around foreign intervention in the national economy. He wanted to see more independent economic development and less reliance on foreign credit. The principal role in this development would have to be played by the central government. Vasconcelos's proposal for a more powerful central government to achieve industrial and socioeconomic develpment was not popular in 1929 but became an acceptable policy from the 1940's on.

The campaign speeches of Vasconcelos echoed new ideas and courses of action. Similarly the style of the campaign was a breath of fresh air in Mexican politics. Already noted was his appeal to youth. He was at home both with intellectuals and the common people. In fact, the candidate campaigned in areas where the government backed candidate was unwanted. One such area was the state of Guerrero, where Ortiz Rubio was so unpopular that he did not venture into the state.

Opposition candidates did not enjoy the financial backing of government supported candidates. Vasconcelos with his growing popularity in all segments of Mexican society, including the women, was backed by funds raised by pro-Vasconcelos clubs that sprang up during the campaign. There was even a Vasconcelos club in New York City. Other sources of income were derived from speaking engagements.

Although the style of campaign aroused much popular support, he also alienated important groups. For instance, he made no effort to reach some understanding with the United States ambassador, Dwight Morrow. Rather his reaction was to give the ambassador twenty-four hours to leave the country.

Neither did he hold out an olive branch to influential military groups with whom he wanted no part. There were dissident military groups whose support the candidate could have cultivated but Vasconcelos was not a strong believer in political compromises. For instance, he condemned the military uprising led by General Gonzalo Escobar on the grounds that the Portes Gil government was a legitimate government. The condemnation did not help Vasconcelos's cause in military circles.

The same uncompromising attitude was demonstrated towards the Carranza supporters, who opposed Calles. On the other hand, reactionaries to the Revolution supported the candidacy of Vasconcelos not because they loved him but rather to utilize him to rid Mexico of Calles. Support from this element was like the kiss of death.

Calles and his group were shrewd political operators and knew how to exploit the weakness of Vasconcelos. Here Portes Gil proved most effective. The interim president made sincere efforts in permitting full freedom for the opposition candidates although there is evidence that local leaders on a number of occasions interfered with the candidate's campaign. To attract support from the student population Portes Gil decreed university autonomy, which provided a greater voice for students in university affairs.

Through newspaper publications the interim president spoke about Mexico's needs. It was not all talk. He saw to it that a protective labor code was passed. With the aid of Dwight Morrow he succeeded in bringing about a truce in the Cristero rebellion. It was a temporary solution to the religious issue, but it terminated the armed conflict. Vasconcelos, on the other hand, criticized the work of Morrow in the truce arrangements as another example of United States meddling in the internal affairs of Mexico.

The Vasconcelos campaign did not receive much support from major newspapers. For example *El Universal*, which prior

to the campaign carried many of Vasconcelos's articles, gave the candidate very limited coverage. When Vasconcelos supporters were attacked by Calles supporters, the events were reported in small headlines. Such was not the case when interim-President Portes Gil condemned the attacks and ordered that they cease. It is not clear why the paper supported the Calles party. Government pressure may be one explanation. On the other hand, the newspaper may have felt more secure with the stability of the Calles government than with the unknown political movement of Vasconcelos.

On election day, November 17, the financial resources of the party in power were very much in evidence. The government carried the voters to the polls in trucks and manned the election polls. The United States consul in Tampico considered the election in that city "farcical". There also was evidence of double voting by the supporters of Ortiz Rubio and imprisonment of Vasconcelos's followers.

Vasconcelos awaited the election returns in Guaymas, Sonora, where he dew up the Plan of Guaymas. This was a contingency plan for action in the event that he lost the election. Vasconcelos felt all along that the party in power would not permit a free and honest election. The fact that his supporters had been frequently harassed and even imprisoned throughout the campaign was sufficient proof for his misgivings. The final evidence for him came when he saw the publication of election results in New York before the election was officially terminated. The results showed Ortiz Rubio with 1,948,848 votes. Vasconcelos came in a poor second with 110,979. A third candidate, General Pedro V. Rodríguez Triana, who ran on the Communist ticket, received 23,279.

Vasconcelos was not about to accept the official results. Even the last minute efforts of Dwight Morrow did not change his mind. Morrow wanted him to send a telegram congratulating the victorious Ortiz Rubio and have the Vasconcelos supporters accept the new president. In return he was promised the rectorship of the national university and cabinet posts for his supporters. Vasconcelos tersely replied to the ambassador's message: "I have not been defeated, I have been cheated."[18] The next move was the implementation of the Plan of Guaymas.

The plan, which had been drafted on the eve of the election, was published in San Antonio, Texas, and in some of Mexico's leading newspapers after the election. In the document Vasconcelos rejected the election returns and bluntly stated he expected an armed uprising in his behalf. One such insurrection under the leadership of General Carlos Bouquet took place, but it never developed into a serious threat against the government. The general was quickly captured and executed when he attempted to flee to the United States.

While awaiting a successfull armed uprising, Vasconcelos fled into exile to the United States, entering by way of Nogales, Arizona. In the United States he met a number of his supporters. One such follower was Manuel Gómez Morín who wanted the defeated candidate to go to Washington, D.C., and discuss the problem with congressional members and officials in the Herbert Hoover administration. This advice he considered dishonorable since it meant having the United States intervene in Mexico's political affairs. Furthermore the advice was impractical since President Hoover made it clear that his policy was one of neutrality in regard to the Mexican political situation.

Morín's suggestion for Vasconcelos to head a permanent opposition party in Mexico was also disregarded. Vasconcelos was convinced that a revolution against the Ortiz Rubio government was inevitable. He thought that the period of armed uprisings that followed the death of President Madero in 1913 would be repeated. Unfortunately for the defeated candidate's political ambitions such was not to be the case in the 1930's.

Vasconcelos's belief in an inevitable armed uprising can be attributed to his underestimation of the stability of the Calles group. There can be no question about the many accusations that Vasconcelos leveled against Calles and his supporters. The closing years of the 1920's had revealed much political corruption in the government. In fact, some historical verdicts compare it to the corrupt *científicos* of the Díaz era. The democratic ideals that Madero proclaimed so loudly in his pronouncement against the Díaz government were far from being achieved by the Callistas. Yet despite all these shortcomings, Obregón and Calles had achieved political stability. A country weary of revolutionary pronouncements and armed insurrections

welcomed such a benefit. In short the Mexican people had become passive after many years of unrest. This political reality was not obvious to the defeated candidate. What he thought to be a short period of exile until some armed rebellion would restore him to the presidency ended up being an absence from his country for ten years.

All, however, was not in vain. As during previous periods of exile, time spent abroad afforded him the opportunity to travel and write. His exile of the 1930's was no exception to the rule; in fact, some of his most prolific writing was done during this period. Not only was the production abundant but the literary quality and ideas expressed brought him international recognition.

EXILE AND THE CARDENAS ERA

The presidency of Ortiz Rubio lasted slightly over two years. The dissatisfaction of Calles with the president caused his resignation on September 1, 1932. Another Calles man by the name of Abelardo Rodríguez took over the presidential reins until the election of Lázaro Cárdenas in 1934.

The arrival of Cárdenas signaled the dawn of a new day in Mexican politics. Although the new president had risen within the ranks of the Calles group, he quickly proved after taking over the presidency that he was his own master. The definite break came when Cárdenas exiled the ex-president to the United States.

Additional evidence of changes in Mexican politics came when the new president insisted on implementation of revolutionary goals stated in the Constitution of 1917. The new leader carried out the subsoil provision, which resulted in the expropriation of foreign and domestic oil holdings. He pushed agrarian reforms to break up large estates. Some of the land was given to the landless as private land holdings but other distributions took the form of *ejido* grants, which were agrarian grants to towns for communal use rather than as private property.

Similarly labor benefited from the Cárdenas programs. Shortly after taking office he showed himself sympathetic to

labor demands. These reforms improved the status of the workers and contributed to the rising power of labor in Mexican politics.

Cárdenas's recognition of the rights of the common man in Mexico added a new dimension to the political scene. Calles and his small group of associates ran Mexico in Bourbon style; namely, power and reform comes from the top. Cárdenas, on the other hand, realized the political significance of popular support, which he amply demonstrated in his campaign for the presidency in 1934. He traveled to remote corners where the sight of national leaders was most unusual. The new style of politics paid rich dividends when the final showdown came between Calles and Cárdenas. Calles found out too late that military coups were insufficient to retain political power.

Vasconcelos was not present when these significant political changes were taking shape. He had left the country, feeling that he had been robbed of the presidency. He viewed both the Ortiz Rubio and Rodríguez administrations as a continuation of the corrupt Calles rule. In a sense he was correct, but he failed to see some significant changes taking place under the Rodríguez presidency. A new generation of political leaders was coming to the fore; that is, men who had been formed by the Revolution and who were convinced that revolutionary goals must be carried out. This was different leadership than the Calles group and previous presidents who came out of the Díaz period and became leaders through military overthrows. Cárdenas belonged to this new breed of leaders, but Vasconcelos tended to see him purely as part of the Calles clique.

After his arrival in the United States, the Mexican *pensador* received lecture offers from the Republic of Colombia. These he could not reject because he needed the income during exile years. Lecture tours also afforded him the opportunity to speak out on Mexican affairs and bring his philosophy to a wider audience. The speaking engagement in Colombia began in the spring of 1930 and shortly thereafter he continued his lecturing in Costa Rica. He attempted to continue the series in Guatemala, but he was denied the opportunity when the United States ambassador to that country voiced his concern over Vasconcelos's anti-United States sentiments. Fortunately, other

republics proved more receptive and this enabled him to continue his lecture tour in Ecuador, and by the summer he was doing the same in Honduras and El Salvador until 1931 when he returned to New York.

The lecture tours opened up opportunities for writing. While he was on the Latin American tour he contracted with *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires to do monthly articles. It was another source of income and a vehicle to spread his anti-Calles sentiments and educate South American readers on Vasconcelos's thinking.

The stay in New York was brief and in 1932 the Mexican Ulysses was on his way to France. He started to republish the periodical *La Antorcha* in Madrid, Spain. Although the attacks in the publication were directed mainly at Calles, it spared no words when it came to attacking all forms of dictatorship in Latin America. The life of *La Antorcha* was brief since the president of Mexico pressured the Spanish government to stop the venture. Furthermore, the republican government which took over Spain in 1931 was not sympathetic to some of the Conservative views expressed by the Mexican thinker. Neither were his attempts to have the anti-Calles articles published in Buenos Aires fruitful.

The setback did not prevent the Mexican Ulysses from devoting himself to writings along a more philosophical line. It was during his residence in Paris that he wrote his *Etica*, which was a defense of Christian ethics.

The next move for the world traveler was Spain where he remained until 1935. Accompanied by his daughter and son-in-law he led a secluded life in the northern part of the republic. It was here that he wrote one of his finest works, namely *Ulises criollo*, which was published in 1935. It was the first of the five volumes of his autobiography, which related the events of his life from his birth to the death of President Madero in 1913. In terms of literary style it ranks far above his other works. Vasconcelos attributed this achievement to his stay in Spain where he had the opportunity to master the skill in the use of the Spanish language. Whether in his autobiographical accounts or other writings, his style of writing was that of a polemist. There was always an enemy to be attacked--a Carrancista, a Heglian or any other opponent that needed to be dealt with. His style was that of an orator--thought in action.

Style was not an ornament or dress but rather it was the sap--not dead foliage. His frankness never permitted him to conceal his thoughts behind a dazzling style.

The volume provides the reader with an insight into the forces that helped shape Vasconcelos. The strong maternal influence and his brief stay along the Mexican-United States border are particularly noteworthy. From the former he inherited a strong love for his Catholic heritage, and from the later experience both a love and animosity towards the Anglo American culture. At the same time the account reveals the frailities and moral shortcomings of the man. It is not done in a spirit of sensationalism but rather the confession of a person who realized that he as well as mankind has shortcomings. Narrating these details provides him with an opportunity to philosophize about women, love, marriage and life in general.

The exile in Spain terminated in 1932 when he left for Argentina. Here he continued writing anti-Calles articles for *Crítica*. It was his continued expectation that a revolt against the Calles group in Mexico would materialize and that his recall to Mexico as the leader of the country's political destiny was imminent. The exiled leader did not recognize the Mexican people's unwillingness to engage in further political uprisings. After all, the Mexican generation of the 1930's had suffered more than its share of revolutions. Even the old Anti-Reelectionist Party that had supported the Vasconcelos candidacy did not invite him to their meetings. Some of its leaders felt that the former leader had abandoned them.

Writing alone did not always bring sufficient resources to support him during his years in exile. In Argentina he supplemented his income as a professor of sociology at the University of La Plata. After three years in Argentina it was back to the United States.

In 1935 an anti-Cárdenas group in New Orleans invited Vasconcelos to that city. The group was composed of Calles supporters who sought to regain political control of Mexico. The meeting brought together two enemy camps on foreign soil. Exile as well as politics can make for strange bedfellows.

The brief stay in New Orleans brought him into contact with another anti-government group, namely the Mexican League for

Defense of Religion, which felt that the religious provisions of the Constitution of 1917 attacked the religious sentiments of the Mexican people. The organization sought to make Vasconcelos the leader of their struggle but the lack of support from Mexican church authorities and the growing power of Cárdenas doomed the venture to failure.

The anti-Cárdenas plot came to light in 1936 when Vasconcelos left New Orleans for Austin, Texas. While in Texas he visited a number of border cities and this rekindled an old idea of leading a rebellion. In fact, during his visit to Laredo he received word from Calles exiled in San Diego, California, about a plan to overthrow Cárdenas. Hearing of such a possibility, Vasconcelos met with the exiled leader on a ranch in the San Fernando Valley near Los Angeles. Calles offered military assistance in the overthrow of Cárdenas and promised to hold an election if and when the revolt should prove successful. He even promised to support Vasconcelos for the presidency, stating, "I have the force and you have the ideas."[19] It turned out to be an empty promise since the ex-president enjoyed little or no support in Mexican military circles. Apparently neither he nor Vasconcelos fully recognized the political power of Cárdenas. Had the plan materialized, it would have been two strange bedfellows seeking control of the nation's political destiny. Vasconcelos obviously was still convinced that he should have been president of his people and with this in mind he admitted that he would accept any help towards this end even if the devil offered it.[20]

The ironic twist in the entire episode was President Cárdenas's offer of a special amnesty to political exiles which specifically mentioned Vasconcelos. The Mexican exile was too proud to accept the offer. Yet he faced the deadline for the expiration of his residency permit in the United States. At this time he was living in Nogales, Arizona, and the expiration of the permit became an honorable excuse to return. The return was made easier with the arrival of President Manuel Avila Camacho in 1940, who, like Cárdenas, repeated the offer of amnesty. Thus ended his ten years of exile which proved to be the longest and final one.

Vasconcelos's involvement in anti-Cárdenas plots between

1935 to 1940 did not mean an end to his writing venture. For instance, the years 1936 to 1939 saw the publication of three more volumes of his autobiography. Already noted was his first volume entitled *Ulises criollo* (1935). In 1937 the second volume, *La tormenta*, appeared. The account relates the revolutionary events from 1913 to the end of the President Obregón's administration in 1924. The third volume of memoirs, *El desastre*, published the following year described the Calles years, from 1924 to 1928. The title of the work shows the low esteem that he held for that political leader. *El proconsulado*, the fourth in the series published in 1939, was a portrayal of the United States intrigues in Mexican internal. According to Vasconcelos, the northern colossus desired to control Mexico in much the same manner as the Roman Empire dominated its conquered possessions through its proconsulates. As proof he pointed to this political campaign for the presidency against Ortiz Rubio and the meddling of Ambassador Dwight Morrow in the internal affairs of Mexico.

The need for income prompted him in 1930 to collect some of his previously published articles and republish them in a work entitled *Qué es la revolucíon*. The work consists of a series of miscellaneous articles, some of which had appeared earlier in the weekly magazine *Todo*. One article treats the subject of Pan Americanism which he claimed terminated with the Buenos Aires Conference in 1936. He credited Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good neighbor Policy for ending the traditional United States policy of treating the Latin American republics as inferior. He found much hope in the fact that both Argentina and Brazil were exerting their leadership in the face of the dominating role of the United States. He still feared Yankee exconomic and cultural penetration in Latin American affairs but felt that Latin Americans were partially responsible for permitting and even cooperating with Yankee intervention.

An example of Latin American cooperation with United States economic penetration was the founding of Rotary Clubs in Latin America. He viewed such clubs as furthering Yankee economic imperialism. In Argentina he claimed he was denied the right to speak at Rotary gatherings because of his anti-Yankee writings. Such foreign influence can be halted if

rotary organizations in Latin America follow the example of Mexican Rotary groups. In Monterrey, Mexico, a group of Mexican business men formed their own Rotary Club free of Yanke rotarian influence. The organization called itself Los Sembradores de la Amistad and Vasconcelos saw this as a public repudiation of Yankee rotarianism.

Another means to counteract Pan Americanism was Vasconcelos's proposal of "Bolivarismo." He argued that Latin America must return to the aspirations of the South American independence leaders, Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín, rather than the Monroe Doctrine which was a disguise for North American imperialism. The aspirations of Bolívar and San Martín can make for a unified Latin America to withstand the power of the northern colossus and once and for all terminate the superior and inferior relationship in the western hemisphere. The Mexican thinker was convinced that "Bolivarismo" became a reality in the Buenos Aires Conference in 1936 when Argentina and Brazil began to show their leadership in Latin American affairs.

Other topics of interest in *Qué es la revolución* are the Mexican writer's views on Latin American heroes. He considered Simón Bolívar a true hero worthy of imitation but not such mexican leaders as Benito Juárez and Venustiano Carranza. These for him are false heroes. The Juárez church reforms of the 1850's he found to be more Protestant than Catholic and that for Vasconcelos could lead only to United States cultural penetration into Mexico. He condemned the Carranza government for keeping Mexico economically dependent on her northern neighbor. Both men he found to be a continuation of Joel Poinsett thinking. Poinsett was the North American minister to Mexico during the 1820's and Vasconcelos and other Mexican historians saw his mission as furthering United States imperialistic interests in the area of trade and the subsequent annexation of Texas. Rather than heroes, these men betrayed Mexico's best interests.

Comments about true and false heroes frequently did not meet with agreement either from Mexican or North American readers. On the other hand, he could also be lavish in heaping praise on United States leaders and institutions. For instance, he

saw much to commend in Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Another case in point was his admiration for the University of Texas. Here was an institution with financial resources able to reward its professors adequately so that teaching and research could truly be a lifetime career. Such, he claimed, was a far cry in Mexico where the poor professor could devote little time to his chosen profession since he had to secure other types of employment in order to survive. Furthermore he envied the intellectual freedom at the Texas institution whereas in Mexico political involvement in university life hindered freedom. One may be sure that Vasconcelos would be challenged by American professors, including those at the University of Texas, who question the adequacy of professorial remuneration and the university's freedom from political intervention. The Mexican thinker's judgments in these matters carry more validity if read in context of the Mexican university situation.

The articles in the collection cited thus far have little to do with the title of the work *Qué es la revolucíon*. Yet there is one article where he defines his meaning of a true revolution.

> Revolution is a collective recourse to arms for destroying illegitimate oppression and restructuring society on a sound economic base and an elevated sense of morality. The fundamental justification of sacrifices that a revolution demands is that it is a means for creating a state more just and more free than the regime which it has destroyed or intends to destroy.21

Although Vasconcelos recognized the necessity of violence in a true revolution, this destructive phase must be temporary and brief. For him there was no such thing as a permanent revolution since that would mean a permanent state of destruction. Any revolutionary who advocates continued existence of the destructive phase is a revolutionist devoid of any constructive goals. A successful revolutionist is the one who creates a better way of life for the people. "In order to be a revolutionary statesman, it is necessary to create, not so much new forms of government but welfare and progress."[22]

Another publication that bears mentioning is his *Breve historia de México* (1939), which he wrote in the library of the University of Texas. Historical critics have found it neither brief

nor historical--a criticism that may very well not be disturbing to the Mexican philosopher. He was not one given to the use of historical canons. History for him was something to philosophize about. It was the taking of well-known facts and giving them a "correct" interpretation. Anyone familiar with the thinking of Vasconcelos will not be surprised at the conclusions the man reached about his nation's past. For instance, he condemned the popular liberal interpretation which praised Juárez's *reforma* of the 1850's as the triumph of light over the darkness inherited from the colonial past.

His version of the Indian past in Mexico is not very flattering to Indian civilizations. He judged the Indian cultures to be very much inferior to the European civilization that Hernán Cortés brought to Mexico. He was not adverse to admitting that the Indians had made cultural contributions to the nation's history, but he could not forgive them for the practice of human sacrifice and polygamy. Human sacrifice showed cruelty of the Aztec people and for him was the cause for the high rate of assassinations in Mexican history. The interpretation was an indictment of *Indianismo*, which extolled the Indian's past in Mexico and denigrated the Hispanic culture. Vasconcelos viewed *Indianismo* as part of a gringo plot to erase the Hispanic heritage and supplant it with Yankee culture. He could not understand why Mexico made so much of honoring Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec leader to die at the hands of the Spaniards, and not once honor the true hero of Mexico's colonial past, namely Hernán Cortés. Obviously he no longer shared the enthusiasm for the Indian heritage that he showed earlier when he wrote and spoke about "la raza cósmica."

The colonial era for Vasconcelos was a period of glory and the national period was one of decline. He praised the Spaniards for bringing Christianity, which contributed to the good treatment and protection of the Indians. At the same time he admitted that not all Spaniards were good Christians and cited cruelty and exploitation on the part of the Spanish conquistadores and colonizers. Thus the Christian missionaries deserve a high place of honor in Mexican annals. As noted already in his educational reform of the early 1920's, these missionaries were the models for his lay missionaries.

Other contributions for which the Spaniards deserve credit were the introduction of food products, government, laws, schools, fine arts and literature. According to Vasconcelos one of the most significant Spanish introductions to the New World was the horse; in fact, he went so far as to state that, "where there have been no horses, civilization remains stagnated." [23] Thus the Indians, who provided forced labor, gained advantages with the coming of the Spaniards. In the words of the Mexican writer, "the only escape for the Indian is the mestizaje of blood and culture which Cortés started, the greatest constructor of the continent and the greatest captain in history." [24]

The glory of the colonial period came to an end in 1810 with the arrival of the independence period, which the *pensador* characterized as the beginning of chaos, misdirected ambitions, hatreds, cowardice and unpatriotic sentiments of the new political leaders. These adverse judgments do not mean that Vasconcelos saw no good in the independence movement. He was too much of a democrat and believer in equality to reject completely the aspirations of the independence leaders. In fact, he felt that Spain should have uprooted its monarchial government and implanted republicanism. If such had been done, then through an evolutionary process Mexico could have avoided much of the chaos throughout its national existence. The independence era was not the flowering culmination of the colonial epoch, but the final stage in colonial decay. Independence leaders became unwitting agents of Yankee imperialism and the removal of Spain's colonial power was the opening for Yankee and European imperialism. Given a choice of accepting Yankee, English, or Spanish imperialism, Vasconcelos made it clear that he preferred Spanish imperialism. But this still was no comfortable choice for the Mexican citizen. If Mexico could redo its history, it should have delayed the independence movement until a more propitious time when it would not easily have become a prey for foreign interests.

Vasconcelos's historical judgments were never final. In the 1940's he presented the independence movement in a more favorable light. Spain was blamed for promoting inequalities, exploitation of Indians, high taxes and failing to implement democratic reforms. This viewpoint is more in keeping with traditional historical judgments on the subject.

Mexican national life from 1823 to 1848 was a very sad chapter. it was the story of a weak and chaotic nation facing the growing power of England and the United States. The Monroe Doctrine, Joel Poinsett and the despicable and dishonest behavior of Santa Anna were bitterly attacked. Vasconcelos even had something good to say about Benito Juárez if for no other reason than that he terminated Santa Anna's rule. The country, according to the Mexican thinker, during its early national existence needed most of all political stability and this he thought could have been achieved under the conservative leadership of Lucas Alamán. He not only considered him a man who always promoted his country's interests first but also a leader who was most capable and devoted to the preservation of the Hispanic heritage. Unfortunately he could find few such leaders in Mexican national life.

The popular Mexican hero,Juárez, does not fare well in *Breve historia de México*. After all, he was the architect of La Reforma of the 1850's which he viewed as a Yankee and Masonic plot since it was an attack on the nation's Catholic legacy and paved the way for the rise of Protestantism. Thus Juárez in the Vasconcelos version was a villain, anti-Catholic and the "hero of Pan Americanism"--in short, a sell out to United States interests, especially Protestant ones.

Despite these adverse opinions the *Breve historia de México* finds some good in Juárez, namely, as a champion of law and democracy and a sincere desire to terminate military rule. Furthermore the Church was in need of reform and this the reformer achieved in the Constitution of 1857. Yet the Mexican writer could never forget that much of the conflict between the United States and Mexico involved the struggle of Protestantism versus Catholicism, which was in his mind an extension of the European conflict to the New World.

In light of what has been said about La Reforma, the reader should not be surprised at Vasconcelos's view of the French intervention in Mexico in the 1860's. France was a Latin nation and therefore the intervention was not a threat to the Hispanic legacy. If there were any misgivings about the affair, it was Vasconcelos's opinion that Maximilian, the French imposed emperor, should have gone all the way in eliminating the Juárez

reforms rather than attempting to achieve a compromise with the Liberals.

The Díaz era in Mexican history from 1876 to 1911 is of special interest since it was during this time that our subject was born and received his education. The reader may well expect a wholesale condemnation of the regime which Vasconcelos helped to overthrow. As already noted, he condemned the materialistic philosophy of Positivism which permeated Mexican national thinking during the late 1800's as well as the dicatorial rule of Díaz and his men. Such condemnations did not prevent the Mexican thinker from seeing virtues in the regime. For example, he credited Díaz for giving Mexico much needed material progress and bringing about a conciliation between the church and state. He approved the government's policy of encouraging Spanish immigration into Mexico. His praises included the fact that the president was a mestizo and therefore represented the typical Mexican. He judged him to be an honest man, but one who unfortunately permitted his friends to rob. His overall evaluation was to see Díaz as the savior of the Hispanic heritage--a welcome relief after the days of Juárez.

Mexico's revolutionary era that began in 1911 provided Vasconcelos ample opportunity to comment about his contemporaries, who served the nation in various capacities of leadership. Again those familiar with the Mexican's autobiography will find little that is new. In analyzing the interpretations a word of caution is in order--namely, Vasconcelos exercised little restraint in changing his opinions about Mexican leaders.

President Madero was a man whom he consistently admired. He described him as an honest man intent on setting up a democratic government. He did not judge him to be anti-Catholic and one to enforce the anti-Catholic Juárez reforms. Rather he saw him as first pushing Mexican and Latin American interests. The misfortune of Madero according to Vasconcelos was that he was ahead of his times.

There was no praise for the Victoriano Huerta government that followed the death of Madero in 1913. Vasconcelos declared this government to be one of the blackest pages in Mexico's history. The Church also came in for its share of criticism by going along with Huerta. After 1943 he revised his harsh

opinions somewhat when he credited the Huerta government with resisting United States occupation of Veracruz in 1914. In Vasconcelos's way of thinking any Mexican leader who showed some determination in resisting Yankee intervention deserves some credit.

The overthrow of Huerta in 1914 brought Venustiano Carranza to the presidential seat. Many pages of indictment in the *Breve historia de México* are devoted to this man. Adjectives such as stupid, dishonest, vain, corrupt, anticlerical and pro-Yankee frequently characterize him. Vasconcelos had to admit that in the beginning he supported Carranza, but he claimed he did this in order to terminate the chaos that followed the death of Madero. He questioned the sincerity of Carranza in passing reforms and the Constitution of 1917. Neither the reforms nor the Constitution were implemented but rather were devices to gain popular favor with revolutionary leaders such as Emiliano Zapata. As usual these harsh judgments were revised in the 1940's when he praised Carranza for keeping Mexico out of World War I despite United States pressure. Such faint praise probably did little to soothe the feelings of the Carranza supporters. They remembered that Vasconcelos had condoned the murder of Carranza in 1920 as a means to rid Mexico of another dictator.

Vasconcelos did not restrict himself solely to evaluating Mexican presidents. Both Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata came in for their share of crit' .ism. The former he considered a shade worse than President Carranza although he did commend him for requesting school supplies for children on his ranch.

Zapata fared somewhat better but the Mexican thinker found much to condemn in the man's life. he thought it a serious mistake on the part of Zapata not to support President Madero. Madero's program was seen as eventually resolving many of Mexico's problems whereas Zapata's land program was viewed as replacing one evil with another.

More serious was Vasconcelos's questioning the sincerity of the revolutionist's demands. He condemned the violence and destruction of the Zapatista movement, which he feared was a return to Aztec cruelty and a threat to the Hispanic culture. His suspicions were further aroused when he claimed that Zapata

had sympathy in United States circles and immediately that made the movement part of a Yankee plot. The murder of Zapata in 1919 at the hands of the Carranza men, Vasconcelos could not justify. In fact, he saw the revolutionary in a more favorable light after his death and recognized the fact that he had played a significant role in Mexican 20th century history.

Another man that aroused the admiration of Vasconcelos was Adolfo de la Huerta, who served as provisional president after the death of Carranza in 1920. He found him to be an educated and cultured man who had the ability of uniting dissident factions. He did not favor de la Huerta's later attempt to overthrow the Obregón government. According to Vasconcelos, de la Huerta had strong popular support and should not have attempted to use military force to overthrow the government.

The reader should recall that the Mexican thinker served as minister of education during the presidency of Obregón, who took over the reins of government after de la Huerta. His views about the man ranged from admiration to suspicion and complete rejection. He admired him for his support of the ministry of education and his administrative and military ability. Common sense, flexibility and practicality were some of the most noted virtues of the man. The admiration reached its zenith when he declared him a true disciple of Madero. However this interpretation is no longer evident in the pages of the *Breve historia de México*. Here he did not find him to be a supporter of Madero. Worse than that, Obregón supported Carranza and not Eulalio Gutiérrez whom Vasconcelos supported for the presidency against Carranza. He still found Obregón an invaluable support in pushing educational reform. Commendations were also in order for the president's practice of appointing competent men to high places and working for conciliation with the church.

The break between Vasconcelos and Obregón came when the latter supported Plutarco Elías Calles for the presidency. From hereon the vices outweighed the virtues. He condemned the president's desire to seek United States recognition which he considered unnecessary and at best a sell out to American interests. If Vasconcelos needed any further confirmation of

selling out to United States interests, it came when the president accepted the northern neighbor's help in suppressing the de la Huerta rebellion. The final condemnation concerned Obregón's amendment to the constitution which permitted presidential reelection. This was a violation of one of the most basic revolutionary goals proclaimed by Madero. Vasconcelos's final verdict was to call the president a "monster."

His views on President Calles are already well-known and the *Breve historia de México* did not show any change of thinking. Calles he considered the most despicable man in Mexican history and described him as ignorant, brutal, immoral, anti-Catholic and subservient to United States interests. On top of that the president surrounded himself with men just as bad as himself. Specific accusations included the enforcement of the anticlerical provisions in the Constitution, terminating the educational work of Vasconcelos, closing Catholic schools and giving in to the demands of Ambassador Dwight Morrow. The only redeeming features in the administration were the Calles agrarian and labor reforms and the decision not to assume the presidency after the death of Madero in 1928.

Vasconcelos's next series of comments treat the three Mexican presidents who served out the unexpired term of Obregón, namely from 1928 to 1934. The first of these was the provisional president, Portes Gil, whom he characterized as a mere puppet of Calles. Next came Ortiz Rubio, whom he classified as another Calles puppet, and whose assassination he thought might have done honor to the Mexican nation. The final one in the group was Abelardo L. Rodríguez, who in the judgment of Vasconcelos was uneducated, dishonest and corrupt. Even worse was the fact that this president had spent much time in the United States and that made him a "pocho" that is, an American hybrid devoid of all culture and under the complete domination of the United States.

If Juárez, one of the most popular Mexican heroes, found it difficult to merit a favorable interpretation from Vasconcelos, neither could Lázaro Cárdenas, another very popular man in Mexico's past. Cárdenas, who became president in 1934, immediately aroused the disdain of the Mexican thinker by the very fact that he was a Calles approved candidate. Although this

was true, Vasconcelos did not admit that Cárdenas in very short order broke his ties with the ex-president and became his own master. Labor and agrarian reforms, which frequently merit praise from historical scholars, were in the thinking of Vasconcelos demogoguery and communistic. Instead of a Dwight Morrow, now Mexico had the United States Ambassdor Josephus Daniels who intervened in the internal affairs of the nation. For instance, instead of crediting the president for improving church and state relations, Vasconcelos felt that this was more the work of Daniels, because American Catholics were pressuring their government to work for better church and state relations in Mexico. Similarly he saw United States influence in the Cárdenas expropriation of foreign oil interests by noting it was a device for the United States to remove British oil interests in Mexico. The interpretation fails to recognize the fact that the expropriation decree also affected American petroleum holdings. The final condemnation of the Cárdenas government concerned the accusation that the president amassed large estates and permitted his close associates to do likewise. Even the amnesty extended by the president to political exiles, including Vasconcelos, did not prompt a grateful note.

The historical writings of Vasconcelos cannot withstand scrutiny by historians. While there is some substance in many of his interpretations, his negative feelings towards the men in Mexico's past are based mostly on his preconceived judgments rather than historical documentation. Thus, for example, Yankee meddling in Mexican affairs becomes too frequently an explanation of what went wrong in Mexico's past. This is not to say that the United States stands innocent in the face of such accusations. Both Mexican and United States scholars have pointed the accusing finger at the United States and it has been done with ample documentation. The fact that Yankee imperialism became an obsession for the Mexican thinker raises questions about many of his historical interpretations.

But to accuse Vasconcelos of writing poor history may not be unduly disturbing to him. After all he was a philosopher first and history was merely a convenient tool to promote his deeply held philosophical convictions. Among these convictions was his love for the Hispanic heritage which he felt Mexico and Latin America

must preserve at all cost in the face of the threat from the "Colossus of the North". His single and most basic criterion for judging Mexico's past was to divide the country's leaders into two camps: ". . . those who, knowingly or unknowingly, have been instruments of the Poinsett Plan which proposes to replace the Spanish with the Anglo-Saxon in the dominion of Latin America, and those who in full consciousness or occasionally opposed the Poinsett Plan . . . ."[25] It was an obvious oversimplification of the complex history of Mexico and Latin America.

FINAL YEARS

The arrival of Avila Camacho to the Mexican presidency in 1940 has been described by historians as a swing to the right. It was a cooling off period when compared to the Cárdenas government. Actually the trend was already evident during the closing years of the 1930's. At the same time it was an opportune time for Vasconcelos to end his final exile.

On his return to Mexico in 1940 Camacho offered Vasconcelos the directorship of the National Library, a post he held until 1947. The first order of priority was the need for a new building but the Minister of Finance Eduardo Suárez vetoed the expenditures for the construction. This action and other disagreements he had with the Camacho administration convinced him that he did not have the necessary government support to carry on his work. The fact that Vasconcelos tended to become more conservative during this period of his life, especially in his religious views, may well have contributed to the strained relations between him and government officials.

After the resignation he decided to found a private library which he called the Library of Mexico. The new venture gave him more independence than he had as the director of the National Library, which was tied to the national university. He served as the director of the new library from 1947 to his death in 1959.

During his directorship the National Library became involved in setting up the Colegio de México. The idea was first proposed by the Mexican philosopher Alfonso Reyes and supported by President Cárdenas. In 1939 Cárdenas had

extended an unlimited invitation to Spanish Republicans, whose cause had been defeated by General Francisco Franco, to come to Mexico. These exiled intellectuals made significant scholarly contributions in all fields in their newly adopted land. These exiles, as well as Mexican scholars, formed the nucleus of the staff in the colegio, which became one of the leading research and graduate training centers in all of Latin America. Federal subsidization of the institution assured its continued success.

Not only did Vasconcelos contribute his services in setting up the colegio but he also lectured at the school. His lecture activities were not confined to his native land but he continued to receive lecture invitations from foreign countries. Since he was a man devoted to travel, and this he considered absolutely necessary for one's intellectual development, he was able on these lecture tours to visit Argentina, Venezuela, Spain and the United States.

Another venture during his final years was the starting of a private preparatory school. That he devoted his energies to the founding of a school in the closing years of his life is further evidence of his dedication to education.

Despite these varied activities he always found time to write. His writings from the 1940's on take on a more mature trait. The earlier aspiration of changing corrupt politics in his native land now gave way to greater emphasis on developing his philosophical system. The media for the expression of his writings became newspapers, magazines, books and the already noted lectures both at home and abroad. Some of the articles appeared in the newspaper *Novedades*. In 1940 he founded the weekly journal called *Timón*, which became a vehicle to express opposition to the allies during World War II. Shortly before he died, television became another means for spreading his ideas. He participated in a program called Mexican Conversations.

His major writings during the 1940's and 1950's were further elaborations of his philosophy. In 1945 the Colegio de México published his *Lógica orgánica*, which was a continuation of the earlier published works: *Etica* (1931) and *Estética* (1935). The work on logic was followed in 1952 with *Todología, filosofía de la coordinación*. As the title implies it was the old theme of Vasconcelos--namely the search for a total and coordinated

understanding of philosophy, religion and science. The thesis of the work can be described as follows:

> Since the theme of this philosophy is reality itself, the seizure of reality will enter according to the order in which the sense reason, and later imagination and revelation, all in a clear hierarchy, give it understanding we have within ourselves an "ethical a priori" constituted by judgments of value and an "esthetic a priori" whose modes of apprehension--rhythm, melody, harmony, counterpoint--permit us to arrange in an orderly fashion, and in unity, heterogeneous elements, while we respect their whole integrity because knowledge by coordination finds it obvious that all living unity is the result of the concurrence of differences. No portion of being escapes from this form of knowledge, not even that which is irreducible to rational reason. The knowledge of the totality of reality, of the relations of its parts among themselves and of the parts with the whole, is what makes possible the truth which saves the orientation of personal destiny. 26

This type of philosophical speculation reaised the usual criticism--namely that it was too speculative and did not face true reality, especially in mexico. On the other hand, there is much truth in the conclusion of Haddox, a Vasconcelos scholar, that

> in the Mexican philosopher this spirit (of unity) pervaded every aspect of his thought. It was as true of his view of the cosmic race, a synthesis of diverse bloods and cultures, and of his Bolivarism, a federation of Spanish American nations into one exemplary union, as it was of his metaphysic of aesthetic monism, his theory of knowledge of union with God while retaining personal identity. 27

Vasconcelos may have changed his mind many times as was the case in his historical interpretations but his deep philosophical convictions on synthesis and diversity remained true for him until his dying day.

Shortly before his death Vasconcelos wrote his last autobiographical account entitled *La flama: los de arriba en la revolución; historia y tragedia*, published posthumously. It was, as the subtitle indicates, a view of the revolution from the top in contract to Mariano Azuela's novel entitled *Los de abajo*, which saw the revolution through the eyes of the common man. The everyday Mexican's involvement in the revolution is very different than the official patriotic propaganda issued by the leaders. Vasconcelos believed it was his duty to tell the less pleasing aspects of those on top who led the revolution. Though

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Vasconcelos was not one to omit telling the vices of the so-called revolutionary heroes, he also insisted on relating the noble deeds of unsung heroes who died for their convictions rather than compromise. For instance, he provided a very vivid and highly favorable account of the Cristero movement. Thus Vasconcelos believed that both he and Azuela had made a significant contribution in portraying a true picture of the revolution from the top and the bottom.

The closing years of his life found him in declining health. he realized the end was near and welcomed death as a relief. Despite his deteriorating health his active pace of work continued. It was typical Vasconcelos behavior--all or nothing.

A review of the man's activities on the day of his death shows little or no letdown in his passion for work. On the morning of June 30, 1959 he had a long interview with a Spanish newspaper correspondent. The themes of the interview treated Christian civilization of the Mexican nation and the Hispanic Catholic legacy. Next he wrote a letter to the United States embassy in which he excused himself from attending the Fourth of July reception. He complete. the morning activities with the dictation of a newspaper article, followed by lunch with friends and relatives.

After dinner he took a siesta but woke up in agony. Unfortunately the agony proved to be a series of heart attacks which brought on his death at the age of seventy-seven.

He died with few financial resources to his name. An account of his possessions showed a few pesos in the bank, a car, and the authorship rights to his publications. He obviously had not become rich through his holding of public office, but the true fortune lay in books. This was not a material legacy to his heirs but a spiritual one not only to Mexico but to all the people in the western hemisphere. In this sense he was a man for all the Americas.

But death did not silence the Mexican *pensador*. The day after his death a letter addressed to one of his friends appeared in various newspapers in Mexico City. Although dated March 8, 1952, Vasconcelos instructed his friend to have the letter published immediately after his death. In the letter he expressed concern over the custom of indiscriminately burying national

heroes in the pantheon of famous men. He found the practice unusual since it involved burying persons of diverse tendencies in the same place. He feared that his country might do him a similar homage. His instructions were not to allow his remains to be buried there as long as his countrymen refused to recognize his election to the Mexican presidency in 1929.

Furthermore in the pantheon there lie the remains of revolutionary figures, nineteenth century reform heroes and Freemasons, all of whom he had opposed either in his writings or in the political arena. Some were his enemies in life and he wanted no part of them in death. Rather he desired to be buried in a humble village chapel. [28]

Vasconcelos was granted his wish but eventually the people of Mexico could no longer deny the overdue honors to one of their most illustrious citizens. In June of 1975 a bronze statue of the man was unveiled to honor him as a philosopher and educator. At the same time a broad, treelined boulevard leading from the eastern entrance of Chapultepec known as Calzada de Tacubaya was renamed Vasconcelos. One can only wonder what his reaction would have been to these belated honors.

CONCLUSION

Generalizations about Vasconcelos are not easy to make. Few are the scholars who have studied the man that do not describe him as controversial. The controversies that he aroused during his life have in many instances not subsided after his death. Much of his polemical nature can be attributed to his intense desire to speak the truth as he saw it even if it meant being brutally frank. Even his friends were alienated by this spirit of frankness.

Both his admirers and even his enemies had to admit that he was a man of diverse talents and activities. His life's work showed achievements as a writer, educator and politician, but at the same time one can easily discern shortcomings in all of these endeavors. Nevertheless a review of his life will show certain traits that characterize the man.

He was a sensitive person both to the needs of his own countrymen and mankind as a whole. Not only did this sensitive nature show in his writings but also in the role as a man of action.

For instance, he attacked illiteracy with his pen but he also wanted to do something about it as minister of education. While he condemned political corruption, he wanted to prove that something could be done about it by running for the presidency. Although he had serious shortcomings in these roles, the fact remains that he practiced what he preached--namely ideas are worthless if they lie dormant.

Much of the cause for his controversial nature was his habit of changing his mind. When Vasconcelos gave vent to his convictions or made a decision to act, it never was seen as the final thought on the matter. Rather it was his conviction of the moment as he saw it. At another time and place he saw it differently, and as a result the subsequent conviction could and did run counter to earlier statements on the matter. On the one hand, he could praise the United States for its achievements; yet, on the other hand, the northern neighbor was the Great Colossus bent on the destruction of Mexico and the Latin American culture.

Another characteristic in his thinking and writings was his strong sense of patriotism. One of his biographers described the trait by writing that ". . . his entire life was a stormy love affair with his beloved--Mexico." [29] The love for his country made him very conscious not only of the greatness of her cultural past but also of her many shortcomings. Among the national shortcomings was the nation's proximity to the United States. Thus, loss of Mexican territory to the northern power and interference by the United States in Mexican affairs were unpardonable errors. Estimations of Mexican and United States leaders were frequently based on their real or imagined involvement in these errors. Yet while his criticisms sound harsh to Mexican and Yankee ears, the fact remains that he was concerned with major problems confronting the Latin American people such as the Hispanic heritage, race, and proximity to the United States.

His aspiration for a true democratic government in Mexico is a hope still to be realized in many parts of Latin America. His demand that United States relations with the Latin American republics be one of equality and mutual respect remains as true today as it was when Vasconcelos first uttered his indictment

against the United States. He was some forty years ahead of his time in pointing to the pressing problem of an uncontrolled birth rate in his native land. The contributions of all races to the western hemisphere and the equality of races is still a timely message in our own generation. Related to the message of the races was his condemnation of racial segregation and a strong conviction that it is the responsibility of every individual to contribute his or her talents to the betterment of society as a whole. He was quick to recognize that twentieth century Mexico had failed to achieve many of these aspirations. Such criticism ran counter to popular thinking in Mexico of his day, but present day critics both in and out of Mexico are voicing similar concerns.

Yet with the passage of time both Mexicans and people in the United States can more easily overlook the abrasive traits of the man's character and take to heart the lessons that he not only taught but also lived. Among his many lessons, the idea of "la raza cósmica" is particularly applicable to the United States. Rather than seeing the melting down of cultural differences as so often has been the desired goal in our country, Vasconcelos saw the coming together of cultures in the western hemisphere as cultural enrichment. It is precisely here that the Mexican American people who carry with them the heritage of a cosmic culture can make one of their most significant contributions to the Anglo American heritage. In the words of a young Mexican American writer, ". . . Chicanos should keep in mind the idealistic views of José Vasconcelos, for if the day ever dawns when racial and cultural harmony comes to this nation, the Chicano will have to think beyond La Raza, and it may be at that time that the hopes of Vasconcelos can be fulfilled."[30] Racial and cultural problems have always confronted the United States as they have other countries, but this became even more evident since the unrest in the 1960's. At this point in our history it would be well for all of us to ponder the lessons taught by the great Mexican philosopher, a man for all the Americas.

FOOTNOTES

[1]For an account of Ricardo Flores Magón's activities in the United States see Juan Gómez-Quiñones, *Sembradores Ricardo Flores Magón y el Partido Liberal Mexicano: A Eulogy and Critique*, Aztlán Publications, Monograph No. 5 (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Center, University of California, 1973).

[2]Some writers give the year, 1881. For a discussion of this matter see Gabriella de Beer, *José Vasconcelos and His World* (New York: Las Americas Publishing Company, 1966), pp. 91-92.

[3]José Vasconcelos, *A Mexican Ulysses*, translated and abridged by W. Rex Crawford (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 23.

[4]Ibid., pp. 23-26.

[5]Vasconcelos cited in Kurt E. Reinhardt, "Facets of Mexican Thought: José Vasconcelos (1871- . . .)," *The Americas*, 2 (January 1946): 324.

[6]Vicente Lombardo Toledano cited in Mario de la Cueva et al., *Major Trends in Mexican Philosophy*, trans. A. Robert Caponigri (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 253.

[7]The conference was called at the request of Argentina, Brazil and Chile to resolve the Mexican and United States crisis over the occupation of Veracruz. The meetings started on May 18, 1914, and lasted six weeks. Since the United States insisted on President Huerta's resignation, nothing concrete came from the conference.

[8]Vasconcelos cited in Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *Mexico; The Challenge of Poverty and Illiteracy* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1963), p. 32.

[9]Vasconcelos, *A Mexican Ulysses*, p. 161.

[10]George I. Sánchez, *Mexico: A Revolution by Education* (New York: The Viking Press, 1936), pp. 66-67.

[11]Vasconcelos, *A Mexican Ulysses*, p. 170.

[12]Vasconcelos cited in de Beer, pp. 307-308.

[13]Vasconcelos cited in ibid., pp. 308-309.

[14]Ibid., p. 311.

[15]Some scholars interpret *la raza cósmica* as racist since it extolled the mestizo people over the so-called pure races such as the Aryan group. For example, see Nicandro F. Juárez, "José Vasconcelos and La Raza Cósmica," *Aztlán* 3 (Spring 1972): 60-75.

[16]The Cristero rebellion lasted from 1926 to 1929 and resulted in much violence and bloodshed. A major issue in the insurrection was Catholic opposition to the implementation of the anti-religious provisions of the Constitution of 1917 by the Calles government.

[17]Vasconcelos cited in John W. F. Dulles, *Yesterday in Mexico: A Chronicle of the Revolution, 1919-1936* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), p. 440.

[18]Vasconcelos cited in Dulles, p. 117. For a detailed view of Vasconcelos's analysis of the election of 1929 see the chapter "The Proconsulate" in *A Mexican Ulysses*.

[19]Calles cited in Ronald Hilton, *"José Vasconcelos," The Americas* 7 (April, 1951): 408.

[20]de Beer, p. 123.

[21]José Vasconcelos, *Qué es la Revolucíon*, 2nd ed. (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1937), p. 91.

[22]Ibid., p. 94.

[23]Vasconcelos cited in Itzhak Bar-Lewaw, *Introducción crítico-biográfica a José Vasconcelos* (Madrid: Ediciones Latinoamericanas, 1965), p. 195.

[24]Vasconcelos cited in ibid., p. 194.

[25]Vasconcelos cited in de la Cueva et al, p. 264.

[26]de la Cueva et al, p. 268.

[27]John H. Haddox, *Vasconcelos of Mexico* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1967), p. 73.

[28]For the entire letter see Hugo Pineda, "José Vasconcelos, Político Mexicano" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1971), pp. 205-206.

[29]de Beer, p. 383.

[30]Mario T. García, "José Vasconcelos and la raza," *El Grito* 2 (Summer, 1969), 51.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bar-Lewaw, Itzhak. *Introducción crítico-biográfica a José Vasconcelos.* Madrid: Ediciones Latinoamericanas, 1965.

Basave, Agustín. *La filosofía de José Vasconcelos.* México: Editorial Diana, S.A., 1973.

Beer, Gabriela de. *José Vasconcelos and His World.* New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1966.

Crawford, William Rex. *A Century of Latin American Thought.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961.

Cueva, Mario de la; León-Portilla, Miguel; O'Gorman, Edmundo; Gallegos Rocafull, José M.; Moreno, Rafael; Villoro, Luis; Zea, Leopoldo; and Salmeron, Fernando. *Major Trends in Mexican Philosophy.* Translated by A. Robert Caponigri. Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966.

Dulles, John W. F. *Yesterday in Mexico: A Chronicle of the Revolution, 1919-1936.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961.

García, Mario T. "José Vasconcelos and la raza," *El Grito* 2 (Summer 1969): 49-51.

Guisa y Azevedo, Jesús. *Me lo dijo Vasconcelos.* México: Editorial Polis, 1965.

Haddox, John H. *Vasconcelos of Mexico.* Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1967.

Hilton, Ronald. "José Vasconcelos," *The Americas* 7 (April 1951): 395-412.

Juárez, Nicandro F. "José Vasconcelos and La Raza Cósmica," *Aztlán* 3 (Spring 1972): 51-75.

Kneller, George F. *The Education of the Mexican Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951.

Pineda, Hugo. "José Vasconcelos, político mexicano," Ph.D. dissertation. George Washington University, 1971.

Posada, German. "La idea de américa en Vasconcelos," *Historia Mexicana* 12 (July 1962 to June 1963): 379-403.

Reinhardt, Kurt E. "Facets of Mexican Thought: José Vasconcelos (1871-. . .)," *The Americas* 2 (January 1946): 322-334.

Rippy, J. Fred; Vasconcelos, José; and Stevens, Guy. *American Policies Abroad Mexico*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928.

Romanell, Patrick. *Making of the Mexican Mind A Study in Recent Mexican Thought*. Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967.

Ruiz, Ramón Eduardo. *Mexico; the Challenge of Poverty and Illiteracy*. San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1963.

Sacoto, Antonio. *Aspectos indigenistas en la obra literaria de José Vasconcelos*. Buenos Aires: Servicio de Documentacion de Libreria Piloto, n.d.

Sanchez, George I. *Mexico: A Revolution by Education*. New York: The Viking Press, 1936.

Schmidt, Henry C. "Antecedents to Samuel Ramos," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 18 (May 1976): 179-202.

Vasconcelos, José. *La Flama.* México, España, y Argentina: Compañía Editorial Continental, S.A., 1959.

_____. *A Mexican Ulysses.* Translated and abridged by W. Rex. Crawford. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1963.

_____. *Obras completas.* 4 Vols. México: Liberos Mexicanos Unidos, 1957-1961.

_____. *Qué es la revolución.* 2nd ed. México: Ediciones Botas, 1937.

_____. *La raza cósmica.* México: Espasa-Calpe Mexicana, S.A., 1966.

_____. and Gamio, Manuel. *Aspects of Mexican Civilization.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926.

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Films

Mexico - The Frozen Revolution, Tricontinental Film Center West, Berkeley, California, 1971, 16 mm, color, optical sound, 60 minutes, high school, college and adult levels.

Makes an analysis of the socio-political reality of Mexico, placing it within the historical context of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917.

Mexico - A Lesson in Latin, Columbia Broadcasting System, New York, 1966, 16 mm, black and white, optical sound, 53 minutes, high school or college levels.

Examines the United States' foreign policy in Latin America from the U.S. intervention in the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to the Dominican Revolution in 1965. Demonstrates that Mexico persisted in her revolution despite intervention and became the most stable society in Latin America.

Mexico - Sterling Educational Films, New York, 1973, 16 mm, color, optical sound, 17 minutes, intermediate to high school levels.

Illustrates Mexican heritage and customs, giving a contemporary view of Mexico today. Presents views on solutions to social and economic problems and indicates some directions the government is taking.

Mexico - 1200 Years of History, Ward (Fred) Productions, 1970, 16 mm, color, optical sound, 23 minutes.

Traces the history of Mexico from the earliest Indian tribes through Spanish rule to modern Mexico.

Mexico's History, Coronet Instructional Films, Chicago, 1969, 16 mm, black and white or color, optical sound, 16 minutes, intermediate to high school levels.

Presents the history of Mexico within the framework of four great events including the Spanish conquest of the Indians in 1519, the revolt against Spain in 1810, the Juárez revolt of 1857 and the social revolution of 1910.

Filmstrips

The Mexican Revolution of 1910, Multimedia Education, Ind., New York, 1971, filmstrip, color, audiotape, 91 frames, junior and high school levels.

Examines the Mexican Revolution from different perspectives.

Mexico - A Study in Peaceful Evolution, Current Affairs Films, New York, 1967, filmstrip, color, silent, 41 frames, intermediate, high school and adult levels.

Traces the history of political unrest in Mexico from 1810. Describes the effect of recent political stability on economic, agricultural and industrial development. Emphasizes the efforts of the Mexican government to raise living standards.

Mexico in Transition - A Series, Encyclopedia Britannica Films, Chicago, 19[illegible], filmstrip with captions, color, intermediate to junior levels.

Depicts Mexico, an agricultural country, struggling to become industrialized. Shows the industrial revolutions occurring in agriculture, industry, education and art. Pictures the history and culture of Mexico. The series is divided as follows:

The Agricultural Revolution in Mexico	- 59 frames
The Artistic Revolution in Mexico	- 49 frames
Arts and Crafts of Mexico	- 49 frames
The Industrial Revolution in Mexico	- 57 frames
The Land of Mexico	- 59 frames
Mexico in Revolution	- 52 frames
The People of Mexico	- 52 frames
Three Farmers of Mexico	- 66 frames

93